

4850 No. 21.
DANIEL'S Prophecy

OF THE
SEVENTY WEEKS, &c.

Explained from
The Sacred Writings,
And APPLIED
To the HISTORY of the JEWS.



Printed in the Year M. DCC. XLIV.

N. B. *Page 83. Line 8. Read Jehoia-
chin instead of Jehoiakim.*





T H E
 Scripture Account
 O F
DANIEL'S Weeks.

THE Prophecies of *Daniel*, especially this of the seventy Weeks, have from the earliest Times of Christianity, been reckoned of so great Importance, that not only Divines, but many of eminent Character in other Professions have employed their Pens to explain them: The Reason is, that mistaken Opinion, which has so long and generally prevailed, That in this Vision the Coming and Sufferings of Christ were revealed to the Prophet. But without Regard to this Interpret-

A

pre-

pretation, or any particular Scheme, thus much is evident from the slightest View of the Prophecy itself, that certain Events of considerable Importance are foretold; that these Events are very minutely described and determined by a Variety of Circumstances and Characters; that the Times are exactly marked, more perhaps than in any other Prophecy of the Old Testament; and that upon all these Accounts, none more justly deserves our Attention; especially if we consider likewise, the Labours of so many learned Men, and the Importance of the Truths that are connected with this Prophecy. For this Reason, I hope, no body will receive what shall be here advanced without the strictest Examination. This I desire the more earnestly, as I am sensible what I say is new, and unconfirmed by Time; that, in spite of the greatest Caution, a Man may be misled by a fond Regard to his own Scheme; that, amidst such a Variety of Opinions, of Necessity, the most Part of those who have writ upon this Subject must have erred; and that our Explication is inconsistent with the Opinions of so many learned and great Men. This I would have the Reader always keep in Mind, that, in the Application of this Prophecy, we differ from such Men as *Scaliger*, *Sir John Marsham*, *Archbishop Usher*,
Pri-

Prideaux, and the great Sir *Isaac Newton*. For though no Authority ought to determine our Opinion, yet the Names of such Men may reasonably excite us to weigh all Arguments with the greatest Exactness. And not to do so, in this particular Question, would be the more inexcusable, as every one that is acquainted with the sacred Writings, and some Parts of the *Jewish* History, which are in every body's Hands, is sufficiently qualified to judge of all the Evidence we adduce: For we have purposely endeavoured to make the Arguments drawn from Scripture sufficient of themselves to decide all Questions arising upon this Subject, and not to embarrass our Reader with chronological Criticisms, and Disputes upon profane Historians, which are both uncertain in themselves, and what very few have any Access to examine.

At the same time, I hope, the evident Contrariety of Opinions among Authors, upon this Subject, will be sufficient to guard the Reader from a blind Attachment to the Authority of any one of them, how great soever his Character may be: For tho', after the repeated and strict Examination of so many learned Men, one might reasonably expect that every thing, that could serve to illustrate this Prophecy, would be so far discovered

and fixt, and every Error so fully detected, that all would be agreed on the true Meaning: Yet so far is this from being the Case, that of late Years, and to this very Day, there are as many different Opinions and Disputes as ever. In so much that I really believe this single Book of *Daniel* has given occasion to the Invention of more *Hypotheses* than all the other Prophecies of the old Testament besides; and this single Prophecy to more, perhaps, than all the rest in this Book; which is the more suprising, as of all the Prophecies, those of *Daniel* are esteemed the most explicite, particular and full.

It was this Diversity of Opinions, together with the many strained Explications I found Authors obliged to use, in supporting their favourite Schemes, that first led me to suspect they proceeded upon false Principles; and made me resolve to examine the Question myself, without regard to any Authority, or Prejudice in favour of any Conclusion: Convinced always of this, That the more important any Point is, the more impartial and free ought we to be in our Enquiries.

For this Purpose I endeavoured to shun those Errors, in conducting this Enquiry, which I had probable Reasons to believe had misled others. These I found to be principally two; the one fixing on the Conclufi-

on, or Event foretold, before a full Examination of the Prophecy, and endeavouring to make the Meaning of the Words, and Chronology tally with that View. This I endeavoured to avoid, by taking care to receive nothing but what I was directly led to by the Words of the Prophecy. And in following this Method, I was much surprised to find, with what Ease, Perspicuity and Evidence every thing opened itself to my View.

The other Error is, being too much led by a Regard to the Authority of profane Historians; and endeavouring to explain the sacred History by the imperfect Accounts they give of these dark Ages. For from the Time the *Affyrians* and *Babylonians* began to extend their Conquests into *Syria*, and their History was connected with that of the *Jews*, till the End of the Old Testament Period, a thousand Difficulties have been started by learned Men, and as many Schemes invented to solve them. Which they endeavour to do by following the Authority, sometimes of one Historian, sometimes of another, how widely soever these Historians differ from each other, to make up an Account that agrees with none of them; by filling up seeming Blanks, and reconciling appearing Inconsistencies from Conjecture; by as-
sum-

suming many things, merely because necessary to complete their Hypothesis, without any Authority; by changing the Names of Kings at Pleasure; foisting in some without any Warrant from History, and frequently supposing those mentioned in Scripture not to be the same who bear the same Names in profane Writers; and many other Methods that have no better Foundation, and shew more the Genius and Learning of their Authors than the Truth of History. And, as there are scarcely two Authors perhaps who agree in the same Account, the Reader, who would not receive things upon Authority, but desires to satisfy himself by a thorough Examination, and comparing Authors together, the farther he goes, is often left in the greater Suspense.

Now all this proceeds from a fond Desire of confirming the Scripture Accounts, and explaining its Difficulties by the Testimony of those Historians. Though I dare venture to affirm, that the Scripture not only contains what is sufficient to decide all these Questions; but if we would follow its Chronology, affords the best Rule to judge of other Historians, and reconcile their Differences. That it never disagrees with profane History, where that is well vouch'd, and consistent with itself. That it generally gives
the

the Eastern Kings the same Names with other authentick Historians, Allowance being made for the Variations which the Genius of the Language occasions; that different Persons are never meant where the sacred Historians agree with others in the Name. And that in short, if we would follow the Scripture Account, without endeavouring to mould it by any favourite Scheme, it would appear quite easy, complete and consistent both with itself and others.

This I say after Examination. For, endeavouring to avoid the Error, I mentioned, in tracing out the Prophecy, I had resolved, from the Beginning, to make the Scripture my sole Guide, so far as its History extends; and was surpris'd to find how little it requires of foreign Assistance to fix these chronological Points on which the Computation of the Times, mentioned in the Prophecy, is founded. And here I cannot but remark, That every Thing about which there is the least Dispute in this Subject, as we manage it, falls within the Period comprehended in the sacred Writings, and may be determined by Scripture Testimony. This makes it easier for every Reader to be fully satisfied, as he is able to judge for himself in what is drawn from the Bible, and may
entire-

entirely depend on what is not, as Points uncontroverted.

Let us now examine the Prophecy itself. And here we shall be most probably led into its true Signification, if we carefully attend to the Occasion upon which it is delivered, the natural Signification of the Words, and general Design of the whole. *Daniel*, we are told in the Beginning of the Chapter, considering the Desolations of his Country, and understanding, by the Prophecies of *Jeremiah*, that they were to continue seventy Years, set himself to pray, with Fasting and Sackcloth, for the Restitution of his People, of the holy City and Sanctuary; and *whilst he was yet speaking*, the Angel *Gabriel* is sent to deliver the Answer of his Prayer, as to *a Man greatly beloved*, in an easy, familiar Manner, *by talking with him, by informing him, and making him know and understand*. For which Purpose he tells him, that, at the Beginning of his Supplications, *the Commandment went forth*, and points out several Periods, at which different Events should happen to his People.

From this general View the following Observations may be deduced.

I. That the Prophecy relates to the *Jewish* Nation, and is designed to express the Revolutions of their Civil and Ecclesiastical State

State. This appears not only from the Occasion of *Daniel's* Prayer, which was the Consideration of the seventy Years Captivity, and present desolate Condition of his Country; or from the Prayer itself, which is wholly directed for the Restoration of *his People, of his City, of the holy Mountain and Sanctuary* from their present Ruins. But in every Part of the Prophecy itself, there are such Expressions as cannot properly be explained any other Way; such as *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City.*—And, *in threescore and two Weeks, the Street shall be built again, and the Wall;— and the People of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary.*— *He shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of Abominations, he shall make it desolate.* All which Expressions can be applicable to nothing but the *Jewish* Nation. Nor is there the least Reason from any of the Words in the Text, to believe that any thing else was in View.

II. It was designed to reveal to *Daniel* how long the Punishment of his People should last; and when they should be restored to a happy and flourishing State. This was the Design of *Daniel's* Prayer, this was

B

what

what he wanted to know; and of this, to be sure, the Angel *Gabriel* was sent, in answer of his Prayer, to inform him. And so much the Words of the Prophecy imply. *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the Vision and Prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.* Every one that is acquainted with the Language of Scripture, knows that, to finish, to make an End of, to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, are synonymous Terms with blotting out, doing away, hiding and forgetting Transgression, and import forgiving and remitting the Punishment of them. To bring in everlasting Righteousness, signifies, to settle the Authority and Observation of the Law of God upon solid Foundations; for the Phrases *everlasting* and *for ever* do not always in Scripture signify a Duration without End, but what is firmly established; to seal up the Vision and Prophecy, must either be understood, to finish and compleat, in which Sense the Metaphor is often used by the *Jews, Arabians* and other Eastern Nations; or to conceal and hide, as things are sealed up, to be kept from being viewed and used.

To

To *anoint the most holy*, must be interpreted, in its primary Sense at least, of the inner Temple, which was called the Holy of Holies or most Holy, and the sanctifying it for divine Service, after having been polluted by common Use, which was done by anointing with the holy Oil appointed for that Purpose. Now all these Things express a Transition of the *Jewish* Nation, from a State of Corruption and Suffering, to a State of greater Purity and publick Happiness. For the same thing may be said of the other Parts of the Prophecy, which are made to terminate in the building again of the Street and the Wall, and the Consummation of these terrible Disasters that were to befall that Nation. Those therefore who cannot deny that the Prophecy is to be understood in its primary Sense of the *Jewish* Nation, and yet would refer the Completion of it to the Death of Christ, or Destruction of *Jerusalem*, are betrayed into a flat Contradiction of the Text. For with how great Propriety soever, *finishing the Transgression*, and those other Phrases may be applied to what Christ did for his Church, yet, with respect to the *Jewish* Nation, his coming and sufferings had a quite contrary Effect. Before the Publication of the Gospel, though the *Jewish* Church was become very corrupt, yet

they still adhered to the Law; and every Act they did in Obedience to it, was to be esteemed righteous and good. But when the Christian Dispensation took Place, and the Law of *Moses* was abrogated, these Observances were no longer righteous but rather criminal Actions.

III. This Prophecy must have some Relation to the State of the *Jews* at the Time when it was delivered. It was their Sufferings at that Time gave Occasion to *Daniel's* Fastings and Supplications. It was for the End of these Sufferings he prayed so earnestly to God. And therefore we cannot reasonably suppose the Angel *Gabriel*, who is sent to give him the Answer of his Prayer, should say nothing of these Sufferings, or when they would end; but begin with what should happen a hundred Years after.

IV. Every thing must be interpreted in the same Manner as we have Reason to believe *Daniel* himself would naturally understand it. The Angel *informs and talks* with *Daniel*, in a plain familiar Manner; (for it is observeable, there is no Mention of that Trembling and Fear with which *Daniel* was seized in all his other Visions) and tells him, That because he was *greatly beloved*, he was sent to him, to give him *Skill and Understanding*, and *shew him* what he prayed for; and

and therefore bids him *consider the Vision*, and *know and understand* what it means. We are not therefore to assume any thing for the Interpretation of this Prophecy, that we have not Reason to believe *Daniel* knew before, or was revealed to him at that time by the Angel.

V. The most plain natural Signification of the Words, where it makes a consistent Sense, must always be preferred. Some, I know, who write upon this Subject, insist much upon that Obscurity and Figure, which they esteem essential to Prophecy and seem to make it a Rule to prefer the figurative Sense. But I see no Need for this Maxim at all. There are many Prophecies delivered in a very simple and plain Manner, and all to be sure are designed to be understood. For it is not the Words meerly, or Set of Images, but the Meaning they convey, that is the Prophecy. And in this particular Case, I do not see the least Design appear of wrapping up the Sense in Darkness and Mystery; there are no Emblems or typical Representations used, as in the rest of *Daniel's* Prophecies; nor any figurative Expressions, but such as are common, and might be used in any Discourse. The Time is computed by Weeks of Years: which, though it appears uncommon to us, yet, among the *Jews*, was as pro-

proper as reckoning by Weeks of Days among us: For by their Law every seventh Year was a Sabbath, as well as every seventh Day; and where this Institution is mentioned (*Lev. xxv. 2, &c.*) Weeks, or Sabbaths which was the *Jewish* Name for Weeks, of Years, are spoken of as a very common Phrase. *And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of Years unto thee, seven times seven Years, and the Space of the seven Sabbaths of Years, shall be unto thee forty and nine Years.* So that this is really no Figure, but a proper Way of speaking. And though the *Hebrew* Word *Messiah*, is kept in our Translation, which makes us apt to think it a proper Name, and apply, it according to the modern Use of the Word, to Jesus Christ; yet in the Original, it is no more but the common Word for *Anointed*. To understand the Meaning of which, we need only recollect, that by the *Mosaic* Institution a peculiar kind of Oil was made, called, *The holy anointing Oil*, with which the Ark only, and its Utensils, the Kings and Priests were to be anointed. (*See Exod. xxx. 24, &c.*) And so sacred was this Oil esteemed, that, for any private Man to make of it, or to apply it to any other Use, than consecrating Kings, Priests, or the sacred Vessels of the Temple, was punished with Death by the Law.

Law. Now it being so strictly appropriated to these Uses, the Designation of *the Anointed* was sufficient to characterise the Office of a King or High Priest; and therefore became as common a Metaphor among the *Jews*, as the Crown, Scepter or Mitre among us. So that by common Use, as happens to many Words in every Language, it was no longer considered as a Metaphor, but understood as a proper Expression. Thence it is we so often find in the Old Testament *the Lord's Anointed*, instead of the King. Now, as Jesus Christ, in a spiritual Sense, performs Offices analogous to those of a King and High Priest, this Designation has been applied to him, in a figurative metaphorical Way, by his Followers. But the *Jews*, and even the Apostles themselves, always conceived the *Messiah*, according to the constant Acceptation of the Word, as the supreme Head of their Civil or Ecclesiastical State. And in this Manner ought we to interpret it here. All the rest of the Words used in this Prophecy need no Explication; but may be taken in their most obvious and natural Meaning.

These are the Observations that may be deduced from a general View of the Prophecy, and serve as Rules to direct us in the Explication of the several Branches of it.
And

And these, I think, are so plainly implied in the Text, that they cannot, without making it inconsistent with itself, be denied; for the Angel *Gabriel* must be supposed guilty of an Absurdity, either if he, professing to instruct *Daniel*, talks of things where *Daniel* had no Foundation or *Data* to understand what he said, or if, being sent with the Answer of his Prayer, he shews no Regard to what *Daniel* had in View in that Prayer; or if, telling him when everlasting Righteousness should be brought in among his People, he means the Time when they should be thrown off from being God's People, their Law dissolved, their Church and Constitution dissolved, and the whole Nation dispersed. These Observations then I shall assume as certain Rules by which to interpret the Prophecy; and not only reject every thing that is inconsistent with them, but admit nothing that does not naturally and almost necessarily arise from them.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

Daniel therefore having prayed for the Restoration of his People from their present Captivity and Sufferings, the Angel *Gabriel* is sent to reveal the Will and Decrees of God to him in these Matters. For this Purpose he first tells him the whole Time that was determined by God's Decrees upon his People, for the Duration of their Punishment. Then, he informs him of the several Periods and Stages of this Punishment. And, lastly, describes very particularly the Circumstances with which the grand Revolution of their final and compleat Restoration should be attended.

The first of these is contained in the 24th Verse, *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City; to finish the Transgression, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the Vision and Prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.* The Meaning of these Words has been already explained, and they could be understood of nothing by *Daniel* but the Punishment of his People: the Duration of which is here limited to seventy Weeks, or

four hundred and ninety Years. And just so long was it, that the *Jews* continued subject to a foreign Yoke.

But before we enter upon any chronological Computations, it may not be improper to let the Reader know in what we differ from the Chronology generally received. That is only in fixing the Beginning and End of the Captivity. For the Reader must all along remember that we begin the seventy Years from the 23d of *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the entire Desolation of the Country, and Subversion of the State and Church of the *Jews*; and end them at the Year in which *Cyrus* took *Babylon*. Though the general Opinion is, That this Period began at the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, or first of *Nebuchadnezzar*; and those who suppose *Cyrus* had an Uncle called *Cyaxares*, who was King of *Media*, took *Babylon*, and afterwards possessed the Empire of *Asia* two Years, place the Return of the *Jews* from the Captivity at his Death, two Years after the Time where we place it. Besides this, some have supposed that the *Jewish* Computation of the Years of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Reign differs from the *Babylonish*; as beginning, not at the Death of his Father *Nabopollassar*, as all other Chronologists have done, but at the Time he was assumed Partner in the
King-

Kingdom, and sent to oppose the Progress of the *Ægyptian* Conquests. By which Means they extend his Reign, some to forty five, some to forty seven Years after the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, though in Truth he reigned only forty three Years after that Time. For, in order to make their Computation of the seventy Years, from the first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, to the first of *Cyrus*, agree with the Chronology they follow, they want four Years, which they supply by these Methods. But this last Opinion we shall shew no further Regard to in our Computations; because these Authors bring no Proofs, except that it is necessary to their own Schemes; because they are obliged to allow, that, in the very same Books of Scripture, the other Computation of his Reign from the Death of *Nabopolassar* is used; because he is called King of *Babylon* before the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, *Dan* i. 1. which shews, that the Time he was King jointly with his Father past before this Year which is called the first of his Reign in Scripture; and because it does not agree with the Circumstances of History. We are told, that when the King of *Egypt* attacked the *Babylonish* Empire, *Nabopolassar*, being old and unable to bear the Fatigues of War, gave the Command of the Ar-

my to his Son *Nebuchadnezzar*; and, the better to establish his Authority, made him his Partner in the Regal Dignity. But we see from Scripture, that this Invasion of the *Babylonish* Empire by *Necho* King of *Egypt* happened in the last Year of *Josiah*, for *Josiah* was killed in Battle opposing him; and it cannot be imagined that the *Babylonians* would make no Opposition till four Years after. Nor is it probable they would begin this War with the Siege of *Jerusalem*. This cannot be supposed to have happened till after they had defeated the *Egyptians*, and reduced all the Provinces on this Side the *Euphrates*. There are other Reasons besides, which I imagine it needless to mention.

These then are all the Differences in numbring the Years. The last I shall take no further notice of. The other two, especially that of the Beginning of the seventy Years, I shall examine very particularly. But as the Arguments on this Subject are many, and the Importance of it requires it should be fully examined, we judge it better to reserve it till after the Explication of the Prophecy. For a Disquisition of this Nature would afford the Reader but little Entertainment, till he is convinced of the Use and Necessity of it. This Opinion then we desire the Reader for
some

some Time to suppose true, and shall endeavour afterwards to satisfy him that it is so.

These things being settled, there can be no Difficulty in fixing the Beginning and End of the seventy Weeks. The Subjection of the *Jews* to a foreign Yoke began in the fourth Year of *Jehoiakim*, or first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, when they became a Province of the *Babylonish* Empire. For tho' three Years before that the King of *Egypt* had killed *Josiah* in Battle, taken and rifled *Jerusalem*, appointed a new King, and exacted a Contribution of the Country: Yet this was but a temporary Calamity of War, for he immediately retired; and seems to have left them as free in their Government as before, since he afterwards sought to make an Alliance with them without claiming any Jurisdiction. But when *Nebuchadnezzar* took the City, it is said *Jehoiakim became his Servant*; and accordingly he afterwards disposed of the Kingdom at Pleasure, and exacted an Oath of Allegiance from the Kings; as he did from *Zedekiah*, making him swear by the Lord. This then is the Beginning of their Subjection. And the End of it is as precise, and can as little admit of any Dispute. For it is plain, that can only be fixt at the Time when the *Jews* became a free and independent State, and all the Authority

ty by which they were governed was derived from themselves. This happened in the third Year of the Pontificate of *Simon Maccabæus* the Brother of *Judas* and *Jonathan*, and the 141st Year before Christ: When the People assumed the Disposal of the supreme Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military Commands; and, in a solemn and full Assembly, by unanimous Consent, made *Simon* and his Posterity for ever High-priests, Generals and Princes of the *Jews*, by a Decree which was ordained to be inscribed on Tables of Brass, and hung up in the most conspicuous Place of the Sanctuary. And this Decree was afterwards confirmed, and the *Jews* acknowledged a free and independent State by *Demetrius* and *Antiochus Sidetes* Kings of *Syria*. It is true, *Simon* and his Brother *Jonathan* were High-priests and Generals before this, but then it was only by the Gift of the *Syrian* Kings: who, till this Year, were acknowledged the supreme Heads of the *Jewish* State; and accordingly levied Soldiers, raised Taxes, appointed Magistrates, executed all the Offices of a Civil Jurisdiction, and kept a strong Garrison in the very Heart of *Jerusalem*. Which Garrison, commanding the Temple, had it in their Power, and often did interrupt the Sacrifices and religious Worship of the *Jews*.
And

And the Fort they posselt was never taken till *Simon's* Time: who, to prevent the like Abuse for the future, not only razed it to the Ground, but levelled the Mountain upon which it stood; which was not accomplished without incessant Labour both Night and Day for three Years. But after this Year, the *Jews* no longer acknowledged the Authority of the *Syrian* Kings; neither paying them Taxes, receiving Magistrates or Laws of their Appointment, nor carrying on the Execution of Justice or publick Acts in their Name; but instead of the Years of their Reign, as they had hitherto done, using those of *Simon* and his Successors for the Date of their Contracts and publick Deeds.

It must be acknowledged indeed that *Josephus* and the Author of the *Maccabees* place the Restoration of the *Jewish* Liberty a short Time before this, in the first Year of *Simon's* Pontificate. For in the *Maccabees* (1 *Maccab.* xiii. 41.) it is expressly said, *In the hundred and seventieth Year the Yoke of the Heathen was taken away from Israel.* And *Josephus* in his *Antiquities* (*Book XIII. chap. 11.*) tells us, *That Simon being appointed High-priest by the People, in the first Year of his Priesthood, delivered the Nation from their Subjection to the Macedonians; so that they ne-*
ver

ver more paid them Tribute. This Liberty and Freedom from Taxes was procured to the Jews in the 170 Year of the Kingdom of the Assyrians, from the Time that Seleucus called Nicanor possessed Syria. Tho' in this Passage *Josephus*, who gives but an imperfect Account of these Times, seems to confound the Gift that was made of the High Priesthood to *Simon* by the Syrian King, with his Election to that Office by the People of the Jews, which happened at different Times. For the Decree of the People was dated in the 172. Year of the Seleucian Era. The only Reason that makes the Author of the *Maccabees* place the Restoration of the Jewish Liberty in the first of *Simon* is, That from this Year the Payment of all Taxes was by a new Grant from *Demetrius* remitted to the Jews, and *Simon* established in the High-priesthood and Command of their Armies. But the Principality and supreme Jurisdiction over the Country still belonged to the Kings of Syria, and *Simon* held his Offices by their Authority, in a Manner independent of the Jews; nor was the Syrian Garrison as yet expelled from *Jerusalem*. Neither indeed were the Jews in a Capacity to dispose of their own Magistracies, till *Demetrius* was employed in the *Parthian War*,
where

where he was taken Prisoner, and the Strength of *Syria* divided by two Competitors for the Crown. If any one however should think this Deliverance from Taxes was the proper Beginning of the *Jewish* Liberty: Then ought he to compute it from the first Grant of this kind made to *Jonathan*, two Years before, by that same *Demetrius*; which was full as ample as this last. For from that Time the *Jews* had a Right to refuse the Payment of all Taxes; and accordingly, though they were afterwards very unjustly demanded, yet they never paid any, but chose rather to take up Arms against *Demetrius* in Defence of that Privilege. And, though we should place the End of the *Jewish* Subjection to Foreigners at this Event, it would make no Variation at all upon our Calculation. For, by a Parity of Reasoning, we should be obliged to fix the Beginning of it at the first Conquest of *Jerusalem* by the *Egyptians*. And both these Events happened at an equal Distance of Time, that is about four Years, before those where we fix the Beginning and End of that Period. But I think there is sufficient Reason to determine us to make choice of the fourth of *Jeboiakim* or first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, when the legal Right to the supreme Government was transferred by an

D

Oath

Oath of Allegiance to the King of *Babylon*: and of the third of *Simon's* High-priesthood, when the People of the *Jews* assumed the Disposal of the supreme Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military Commands, without owning any Dependence on the *Syrian* Kings.

After this the Computation of the seventy Weeks may be made without any Difficulty. For from the fourth of *Jeboiakim* or first of *Nebuchadnezzar* till the Captivity, is twenty three Years; after which the Captivity lasted seventy Years, and ended that Year in which *Cyrus* took *Babylon*. Both these Periods fall within the Scripture History, and may be well enough known from it. The remaining Part, though taken from profane History, is quite certain: For the taking of *Babylon* is an *Æra* as remarkable and uncontroverted as any perhaps in all Antiquity; as from that Time, the Affairs of the East, which were before involved in the greatest Obscurity, began to clear up. This Event happened in the five hundred and thirty eighth Year before Christ. And it is as certain that the Decree, by which the *Jews* gave the Government to *Simon*, was made in the hundred and forty first. So that the Distance betwixt them is three hundred and ninety seven Years: Which added to the
twenty

twenty three, and the seventy that past before the taking of *Babylon*, makes precisely seventy Weeks, or 490 Years.

In this manner the Time agrees: And I believe every one that is in the least acquainted with the *Jewish* History will be satisfied that the Events correspond as exactly. In this Part of the Prophecy two Things are foretold. One is, That the *Jews* should suffer seventy Weeks to expiate their Guilt. The other, that after these Weeks were expired, *Everlasting Righteousness should be brought in*, and a State of greater Purity and Happiness take Place. Accordingly, during this whole Period of four hundred and ninety Years, the *Jews* were in continual Subjection to Foreigners; and generally in a worse Condition than the other Provinces of the Eastern Empires. What they suffered before and during the Captivity, and how after their Restoration by *Cyrus* they were harrassed by their Neighbours, is well known; And it was not till very late they were able to raise the Temple and Walls of *Jerusalem* from their Ruins; and to procure a Grant from the *Persian* Kings to form their Government and Church according to their own Laws. And after the Dissolution of the *Persian* Empire, being situated in the middle betwixt the two most

ful of the *Macedonian* Kingdoms *Syria* and *Egypt*, and belonging to each of them by Turns, their Country was the constant Seat of War, and the Prey of changing and temporary Masters; who not only robbed the Country, but carried away prodigious Numbers of the People to fill up the new Cities they had built. Besides, the Opposition of their Religion and Customs to those of all other Nations exposing them to Suspicions and Hatred, they were often upon the Brink of being entirely extirpated, Decrees being several Times published for that Purpose. By the *Persians* in the Time of *Ahasuerus* and *Esther*; by the *Egyptians* in the Time of *Ptolemy Philopator*; and the *Syrians* in the Reign of *Antiochus Epiphanes*. So that justly may this Period be called seventy Weeks of a national Punishment.

Nor was the other Part of the Prophecy, the Restoration of their Liberty, accomplished in a less remarkable Manner: For *Simon*, that very Year he was elected High-priest and Prince by the People, sending an Embassy to the *Romans* to renew the Alliance they had formerly made with his two Brothers: The Senate not only granted his Request, but writ to all the *Asiatick* States that were in Alliance or Subjection to them

ac-

acknowledging the *Jews* as their Allies and Friends; and requiring those Nations to restore their Fugitives, and neither themselves to molest them, nor join with their Enemies. This Patronage made the *Jews* more regarded by the neighbouring Nations than ever. At the same time the *Syrian* Kings too acknowledged them as an independent and free People; and though some slight Attempts were afterwards made to bring them again under the *Syrian* Yoke, yet they never had any Effect. For *Simon*, having fortified all the Towns, and trained the Inhabitants to Arms, had rendred the Country quite secure against all foreign Invasions: So that, while *Syria* was full of Distractions and Bloodshed, being torn in Pieces by several Pretenders to the Crown, *Judea* enjoyed a long and uninterrupted Peace. Besides, *Simon* having in the Beginning of his Government taken and fortified *Joppa*, which was the nearest Sea-port Town to *Jerusalem*, together with *Jamnia* and *Gazara* opened all the Trade of the *Mediterranean*, which brought immense Riches into the Country. How considerable this Trade was, we may judge from what *Strabo* observes, "That the Town of "*Jamnia* and Coast round it were so populous, that they had sometimes put 40,000 "*Men in Arms.*" This Wealth and Security

rity encouraged the People to apply themselves to Agriculture, and the other Arts of Life; while the Mildness, Wisdom and Justice of the Government, which was remarkable under *Simón* and his Son *John Hyrcanus*, preserved Peace, good Order and Harmony in the State, which made Learning and Religion flourish. So that at no Time since the *Babylonish* Captivity were the People of the *Jews* more happy, or their State more powerful than during this Period. This agrees with the Character given of those Times by the Writer of the *Maccabees*, (*1 Maccab. xiv. 4, — 15.*) and *Josephus* (*Antiq. Lib. XIII. c. 11. and 17.*)

But though the exact Agreement of the Time and Events with the Prophecy may seem to be all that is requisite for its full Explanation, yet there is something further that may deserve our Regard. 'Tis probable this Revelation was made to the Prophet, not merely to tell him so many bare Facts; but to make him acquainted with the Ways of God towards his People and Church, and vindicate the Justice and Wisdom of his Providence. This is the Use such religious Men as *Daniel* desire to make of what they observe in the World: and of this the whole sacred History seems only designed as an Exemplification. Let us examine then if *Daniel*

niel had a sufficient Foundation to judge of this from what was revealed to him. *Daniel* knew, that in the Dispensations of God's Providence *the Iniquities of the Fathers were often visited upon the Children*, and that a Nation, being considered in a political Capacity as one Body, was liable to Punishment for Crimes committed many Ages before in a publick national Manner; as in the Case of *Amalek*, and the seventy Years Captivity, which was inflicted for the Crimes of *Manasseh*, and innumerable Instances in Scripture. *Daniel* knew, that in these Punishments there generally was such a Congruity with the Nature of the Crime as made them appear the proper Punishments for these particular Crimes. *Daniel* knew, that at that very Time *Judea* lay quite desolate for seventy Years, because just so many sabbatical Years the People had neglected to observe; and that in the same Manner, in other Punishments, a Regard was had to the Duration of the Crime for which they were inflicted. *Daniel* knew likewise, that God's People never suffered but for some Defection from God's Law; and may be supposed throughly acquainted with their History. Now, in this Vision, he is informed by the Angel of the Duration and Nature of the Punishment; and therefore would

naturally consider, if any national Crime of the *Jews* corresponded with it. And such an one there was: Their Defection from God as their political Head and Governor, and setting up a King in his Room. I think I need say little of the Propriety of the Punishment: That is evident enough of itself. And the Duration of this Defection and its Punishment answer exactly to one another. For just so long did the *Jews* suffer all the Miseries of the worst kind of publick Slavery, as they had lived under the Government set up by them in Opposition to the Will of God. Of this any one may satisfy himself by consulting the Margin of his Bible, and computing the Time that past betwixt the first of *Saul's* Reign and the fourth of *Jeboiakim*. This Period he will find to be exactly four hundred and eighty nine Years; which falls short by one of the seventy Weeks of Subjection: But a single Year may very well be overlookt in a Computation of this kind.

I know we are apt to think too slightly of this Defection; and that because we are more conversant with the History of the *Jews*, while under the Regal Government, than under the Theocracy. And because we find that Government countenanced, and the Possession of it promised to *David* and his

his Posterity for ever by God himself. But though, after it was legally established, the People were under all political Obligations to yield Obedience and to support it; and the Prophets could not be supposed openly to condemn it: yet that the Establishment itself was a direct Rebellion against God, we cannot well doubt, when we read the History of it in the 8th and 12th Chapters of the first Book of *Samuel*. There it is said, *The Lord their God was the King of Israel*, and that the People's asking a King was *a rejecting God that he should reign over them*. Nay God himself compares this Defection from him as their political Head, to their Defection from him, by Idolatry, as the Object of their Devotion; and commands *Samuel* to protest solemnly to the People against this Deed: which he does, after having presented the King to them, and writing what he said, lays it up as a Monument to future Ages before the Lord. Afterwards he works a Miracle, that the People might *perceive and see that their Wickedness was great in asking them a King*: Which they are so sensible of; that they intreat *Samuel* to intercede for them with the Lord, *that they might not die*.

It is very certain, That the original Intention of the *Jewish* Constitution and Law

E

was;

was, That they should have no regular and established supreme Magistrate; but that they should be directed in all publick Affairs by Responses given to the High-priest by *Urim* and *Thummim*, or by the Revelations of Prophets and Dreams. Therefore, when the People offered the Government to *Gideon* and his Posterity, he refused to rule over them, because the Lord should rule over them: (*Judg.* viii. 22, 23.) And it was the same Form of Government the *Jews* expected to have re-established after the Captivity. (See *Ezra* ii. 63. and *Nehem.* vi. 65.) It is observed too, That, after the Government became hereditary, God no longer spoke by *Urim* and *Thummim*, or acted any Way in the Character of their political Governor. He could no longer be consulted in a regular Manner; but only interposed, upon particular Occasions, by his Prophets, to encourage the People in great Exigencies, or threaten them with impending Judgments, when they departed from his Law. So that from the Nature of the Thing, as well as Expressions in Scripture, the Change of their Government appears to have been a great Crime.

Besides, after the Time of the Judges, the *Jews* had been more negligent in obeying several religious Institutions, as in the Observation

servation of the sabbatical Years; (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 21.) the Celebration of the Passover, (See 2 *Kings* xxiii. 22. and 2. *Chron.* xxxv. 18.) and others: (*Nehem.* viii. 17.) which might partly be the Reason of this severe and long Punishment.

Some may perhaps object to this Account of the Prophecy, that we have not begun the Computation of the Weeks from the going forth of any Commandment, as all others have done. In answer to this I would desire my Reader to examine what Authority there is for beginning it thus. I know not how this has always been taken for granted, without ever being called in question, or proved. I am sure, that neither in this Verse, where the seventy Weeks are spoken of, nor in any other Part of this Prophecy, are they said to begin from the going forth of the Commandment: Nor is the Commandment mentioned as an *Æra* till the next Verse, where it is applied to quite different Periods. And this single Observation, as it removes the Foundation upon which all former Schemes have been founded, I cannot help thinking should make them fall to the Ground.

This then is the Explication of the first Part of the Prophecy. Whether it agrees

with the most natural Signification of the Words, or the History and Chronolgy of the *Jews*, the Reader may judge for himself. In this respect however it evidently has the Advantage of all others, that it appears a direct Answer to the Intention of *Daniel's* Prayer; that it is such as he could fully understand; for being formerly acquainted with the Beginning of the *Jewish* Slavery, and now told how long it was to last, he could not fail to know when the Freedom of his People was to be restored; that it comprehends the Time of those Sufferings which *Daniel* was then lamenting; and that it makes him acquainted with the Reasons and Progress of God's Providence; Which are things that have not been attended to before.

S E C T. III.

AFTER telling, in general, what Number of Years was determined for the *Jews* to suffer; the Angel goes on to inform *Daniel* of the chief Revolutions that should happen to their State, and the several Steps that should be taken, to bring about their entire Restoration during that Period. This he introduces, by saying, *Know therefore and understand*, which shews, that it is only a par-

particular Explication and Detail of what he had said before. *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven Weeks, and in threescore and two Weeks the Street shall be built again and the Wall or Breach, (for so the original Word signifies) even in troublous Times, and after threescore and two Weeks shall Messiah (or the anointed) be cut off, but not for himself, or, and they shall be no more his People.* Here the Verse should end, for there is a full Pause, both in the Words and the Sense. Nor is there any Reason for joining the seven Weeks, and the threescore and two Weeks together to make sixty nine: For besides the Oddness of such an Expression, and that it is unwarranted by any Example of the same Kind, they are separated by an *Athnach* in the original Text.

In this second Part of the Prophecy, the Angel foretells three different Events,—The coming of the Anointed the Prince,—The rebuilding the Street, and repairing the Breach—, And the cutting off the Anointed: All which must be considerable Revolutions in the *Jewish* State, and have some Reference to the Restoration of their Liberty. And
the

the precise Times, when these Revolutions should happen, are clearly pointed out by the Number of Weeks, from a certain *Æra* mentioned in the Text, *The going forth of the Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem.* Now this *Æra* must be such an one as *Daniel* was acquainted with: For to tell a Man, that from such an *Æra* to such an Event is so long time, if he is ignorant of that *Æra*, is really not to inform him when that Event should happen; and is in Effect saying nothing. Besides it must be such an *Æra* as has some Connection with the Event; so that a probable Reason may appear why it is chosen. Now, if the Writers on this Subject had fixt it at the Commandment of *Cyrus*; as *Daniel* knew by the Prophecies of *Jeremiah*, when that was to happen, it might have answered all these Conditions. This however will not answer any of their Schemes, and has therefore never been used. But to fix it at the Time when *Darius Nothus* renewed *Cyrus's* Grant, as some have done; or at *Ezra's* Commission from *Artaxerxes*, or *Nehe-miah's*, as others, cannot answer any one of these Conditions: For *Daniel* was equally ignorant of all of them. And if so many learned Men, after all the Events have happened, and the Chronology is fixt, can-

not

not determine from which of these Periods to reckon; how could *Daniel* know a hundred Years before any of them happened? Neither have these any Connection with the Events; nor indeed were they properly Commandments to restore and build *Jerusalem*. That of *Darius Nothus* was only a Permission to finish the Temple. Those of *Artaxerxes* were, the first to order the better Execution of the Law, the other only to repair the Walls of *Jerusalem*.

But without having Recourse to Histories or Calculations, this *Æra* is plainly enough revealed in the Text. For the Commandment is the same with that mentioned in the Beginning of the Angel's Speech, Verse 23. *At the Beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew it* (for thus it should be supplied, and not *to shew thee*) *for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand, &c.* For in both Places, the Original Word for Commandment is the same, (*Dabar* the Word) and peculiarly applicable to the Commandments of God; whose Word not only determines future Events, but brings that into Being which was not. And what Commandment can we suppose came forth from God at the Beginning of *Daniel's* Supplications, in consequence of his being greatly beloved, of which

which the Angel *Gabriel* was sent to inform him, but that which was the Answer of his Prayer. Now what was it *Daniel* prayed for, but that God's Anger might be turned away from *Jerusalem*, his People and Sanctuary; and that he would command them to be restored. His Prayer is heard, the Commandment is given, and the Angel *Gabriel* dispatched to shew him the Commandment, and how long it should be to the Execution of it. For though the Decrees of God are from all Eternity, yet he is often represented in Scripture as being entreated, as repenting, as yielding to the Prayers of his People, and for their Sakes altering his Decrees; which is very properly exprest in the prophetick Stile by the Commandments going forth from the Judgment-seat of God, with the same Solemnity as the Angels are represented, in the Visions of *Daniel* and *John* the Apostle, lifting up their Hands to Heaven, and swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever. But the chief Design seems to have been, That it might serve as a Foundation of entire Confidence to *Daniel*. For as in making him acquainted with the Date of future Events, nothing could be more natural than to begin the Computation from the present Time; so nothing could give him more certain Assurance of their Accomplishment

plishment at these Times, than to reckon from the exprefs Commandment and Promise of God.

I might observe here, That the Septuagint Translation determines it exprefly to this Sense, by rendring the Passage; *From the going forth of the Word (or Commandment) to answer and to build:* Which can be understood no other Way, than of the Commandment to the Angel to give *Daniel* the Answer of his Prayer. And as the *Hebrew* Word sometimes bears that Signification, it ought certainly in this Place to be preferred, as it faves an useless Tautology, and fixes the Meaning of the whole Prophecy.

To settle this *Æra* then, we need only enquire in what Year of the Captivity it was *Daniel* saw this Vision. This, I think, is sufficiently determined by the Scripture; and it is quite reasonable, or rather necessary it should be so. For the whole Design of the Scripture, in this Prophecy, being to reveal Times to us, we could make no Sense of it, nor indeed would it be any Prophecy to us, if it did not give us sufficient *Data* to ascertain the Beginning of these Periods. For this very Purpose therefore, the Date of this Vision is exprest in the first Verse of this Chapter, and said to happen *in the first Year of Darius the Son of Abasuerus, of*
F
the

the Seed of the Medes, which was made King over the Realm of the Chaldeans; which happened immediately upon Belshazzar's Death. (See Chap. v. 30, 31.)

But here a Question arises, who this *Belshazzar* was; for there is no such Name occurs in the Catalogue we have of the *Babylonish* Kings. This has given Occasion to various Hypotheses: Some imagining *Belshazzar* the same with *Evilmerodach*, some with *Laborsoarchod*, and others with *Nabonidus*. *Laborsoarchod* it could not be; for he was but an Infant, and reigned only nine Months: and the third Year of *Belshazzar* is mentioned in *Daniel*. But many have been tempted to think him *Nabonidus*; and *Cyaxares*, *Cyrus's* Uncle, *Darius* the *Mede*, from a Notion that he is represented as the last of the *Babylonian* Kings. But there is no Foundation for this Opinion: *Cyaxares* is a fictitious Person; *Nabonidus* was no way related to *Nebuchadnezzar's* Family, and *Belshazzar* is frequently, in *Daniel*, called his Son; nor does the History of their Deaths agree in any one Circumstance. *Belshazzar* was murdered in the midst of a Feast: *Nabonidus* was not killed, as they suppose, when *Babylon* was taken; but after that, was besieged by *Cyrus* in the Castle of *Borzippa*, and, when taken, made Governor

vernor of *Carmania*. Indeed I am at a Loss to imagine, how any one, that made the Scripture his chief Guide, should think of any other than *Evilmerodach*. By the general Consent of all Historians and Chronologists, he was the Son and immediate Successor of *Nebuchadnezzar*; and such *Belshazzar* is represented in *Daniel*. For in the fifth Chapter, *Nebuchadnezzar* is no less than six several times called his Father, by the Queen-mother, *Daniel* and *Belshazzar* himself; and he is called his Son: Nor is there the least Shadow or Appearance of Reason, from Scripture, for interpreting this Grandfather and Grandson. And the Manner of his Death agrees: for *Evilmerodach* was killed when least expecting it, by a Conspiracy. Besides, in the Book of *Baruch*, the captive Jews are advised to pray for the Lives of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Balthasar* his Son, that they might live long under their Shadows; which shews that he was his immediate Successor. (See *Baruch* i. 11, 12.) Accordingly, these Reasons have induced Sir *John Marsham* and other eminent Chronologists, who have laboured to reconcile the sacred with profane History, to be of this Opinion. But for our Part, it is enough we agree with the literal Text, and that there

are no Arguments, deduced meerly from Scripture, against our Opinion.

This *Belshazzar* is, by other Historians, and twice in the Bible itself, called *Evilmerodach*. But we ought not from this one Example to infer, that the *Babylonish* Kings had generally more Names than one: for *Evilmerodach* was evidently a Name of Contempt only, signifying *foolish Merodach*. And it is remarkable, that all those *Babylonian* Kings who have their Names compounded with *Merodach*, were effeminate and weak Princes; as *Merodach Empadus*, or *redeemed Merodach*, who did not get into his Father's Throne till after it had been possess'd by four Strangers; *Messeffimordachus*, or *dissolute Merodach*, whose short Reign of four Years threw the Kingdom into such Disorders, that there followed an *Interregnum* of eight Years; and this *Evilmerodach*, who has the Character in profane Historians, and is represented in *Daniel*, as a luxurious Prince. I have some Reasons that induce me to believe, that *Merodach* was the God of Pleasure and revelling, or the *Bacchus* of the *Babylonians*. But as I have no positive Authority, and it is not necessary to our present Question, I shall not trouble the Reader with any Conjectures. What is said however may serve to make it
pro-

probable that *Evilmerodach* was not his original and royal Title; though this Name seems at last to have prevailed, and obliterated the other, after he was killed, and the Kingdom fallen into the Hands of his Enemy. And therefore the Author of the second Book of *Kings* and *Jeremiah*, writing after his Death, give him that Name by which he was then most generally distinguished: But *Daniel* writing what past in his own Court, and, as is supposed, near the Time it happened, gives him the Name he assumed to himself. Besides, there is Reason to believe *Nebuchadnezzar* would give his Son this Name of *Belsazzar*. For it may be remarked that, the *Babylonians* being a very superstitious People, it was customary for their Kings and great Men to assume the Name of some of their Gods. These were chiefly three, *Nebo*, *Bel* and *Merodach*; as we find them mentioned in the Prophecies against *Babylon*. *Isa.* xlv. 1. *Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their Idols, &c.* And *Jer.* l. 2. *Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in Pieces, &c. her Idols, &c.* And, accordingly, we find some one of these in the Composition of all the Names of the *Babylonish* Kings, that is, all such as were originally of *Babylonish* Extraction. Thus *Nebo* or *Nabo* is found in
Na-

Nabonassar, Nabopolassar, Nabuchodonosor, Nabonidus or Naboandelus, and Nabuzardan; Bel or Baal in Belus, Belibus, Baladan or Belesis, Merodach-Baladan, Belshazzar; and Merodach in Merodach-Empadus, Messimordachus and Evilmerodach. Now in a Country, where Nativities, the Aspects and Influences of Stars, lucky Hours, and all the Chimæras of Astrology prevailed so much, and particular Gods were believed to preside over them; it is probable they would be determined by these Things, not only in the Choice of their Name, but the God to whom they were more particularly devoted. Thus *Nisroch* is called *Sennacherib's* God, and *Bel, Nebuchadnezzar's*; for to him he built a most magnificent Temple, and dedicated the Spoils of War. And from him it is said that he named *Daniel, Belteshazzar, according to the Name of his God*: Which makes it probable the same Reason might induce him to call his Son *Belshazzar*.

But to fix the Time of the Vision, we must first know how long *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Evilmerodach* reigned. *Nebuchadnezzar*, it is agreed on at all Hands, reigned forty three Years; and *Berosus* and *Ptolomy's* Canon assign two Years to his Son, which, as it is not controverted by the modern Chronologists, tho' *Josephus* makes him reign eighteen

teen, I shall follow as the most probable: For it is no Objection to it, that the third Year of *Belshazzar* is mentioned in *Daniel*, as he might have only begun that Year when he was killed. We must likewise reckon the 43d of *Nebuchadnezzar* and first of *Belshazzar* the same Year. Which I prove from the Manner *Ptolomy* constantly uses in reckoning the Reigns of Kings: For if any one began a Year, though he died the first Month of it, he assigns him the whole Year; and for the same Reason, omits all that died the same Year they came to the Kingdom, of which there are four or five Examples in his Catalogue of the *Persian* Kings. But this is likewise fixt by the Scripture Chronology: For at the Return or Beginning of the seventh Year of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Jeboiahin* was carried captive; (compare 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 10. with *Jerem.* lii. 28.) and in the thirty seventh Year of his Captivity he was released by *Evilmerodach* King of *Babylon*, in the Year that he began to reign, (2 *Kings* xxv. 27.) a Phrase that sufficiently distinguishes it from the first compleat Year of his Reign: So that the thirty seventh of his Captivity, and first of *Evilmerodach*, fall in the same Year with the forty third of *Nebuchadnezzar*.

Now the seventy Years Captivity beginning

ning, as we shall prove afterwards, at the entire Depopulation of the Land, in the twenty third of *Nebuchadnezzar*; it follows that the forty third of his Reign, or first of *Evilmerodach* must be the 20th of the Captivity, the second the 21st: And the next Year, which was the last of *Evilmerodach*, the first of *Darius the Mede*, and 22d of the Captivity, *Daniel* saw the Vision; and from thence the several Periods must be computed.

This being once settled, would naturally lead us to fix the Events by the Times; but this is not enough: We must likewise examine whether they agree with the Intention of the Prophecy, and the Marks by which they are characterised in the Text; for by these we must be led to the Interpretation. The first that is mentioned then is the *Messiah* the Prince. This should be one of whom *Daniel* must not only have had some Fore-knowledge, but likewise known, that with his coming the Deliverance of his People the *Jews* was connected. And such an one there was. *Cyrus* had been prophesied of by Name, in the Writings of *Isaiah*, as the great Deliverer of God's People; and is even called by the Lord *his anointed*, or *his Messiah*. *That saith of Cyrus, he is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my*

my Pleasure, even saying to *Jerusalem*,
Thou shalt be built, and to the Temple,
Thy Foundation shall be laid. Thus saith
the Lord to his Anointed, (his Messiah) to
Cyrus whose Right-hand I have holden,
&c. Isa. xlv. 28. and xlv. 1. And it had
been often foretold that the *Babylonish* Em-
pire should be overturned by the *Persians*.
So that by all this *Daniel* must have under-
stood as much as if the Angel had expressly
told him, that, after a certain Number of
Years, the *Babylonish* Empire should be dis-
solved; that the *Persians* should succeed; and
that *Cyrus*, their first King, should restore
the dispersed *Jews*, and order *Jerusalem*
and the Temple to be rebuilt: which is all
we know of this Revolution in the *Jewish*
State, to this Day. Besides, *Cyrus* might well
be distinguished by the Appellation of the
Anointed or *Messiah*, as much as by his
own proper Name: not only as it is peculiar
to him, because he was called by God his
Messiah; but because he was the first Empe-
ror of *Persia*: And the *Rabbies* tell us,
That it was only the first King of a Race
that was anointed. So that in this Respect
too, this Epithet sufficiently distinguishes
him from the other Kings. And the Time
falls exactly right; for from that Time of
the twenty second Year of the Captivity,
G when

when *Daniel* saw the Vision, to that Time of the first Year of *Cyrus*, when he granted the Decree in favour of the *Jews*, was just seven Weeks or forty nine Years: Which is plain by subtracting twenty one from the seventy Years of Captivity. The precise Time of Year indeed is neither mentioned in the Vision, nor in the Decree. But we may easily suppose they would exactly agree, as it appears from Circumstances, that they both happened when the Year was advanced.

The next thing foretold in this Part of the Prophecy is, That, *in threescore and two Weeks the Street should return and be built* (as it is in *Hebrew*) *and the Breach* (for so the Word signifies) *even in strait of Times, or, troublous Times*. Where it is to be observed that the Word *Breach*, by a Metaphor common to all Languages, is so often applied to the Destruction of a Constitution or Church, as well as a Wall, that it may as naturally be explained of the one as of the other. And that the first is meant here, is far most probable; for the repairing of a Street and Wall, if nothing else is implied, was an Event scarce worthy to be foretold by an Angel so many Ages before. Though indeed the Prophecy was exactly fulfilled in both these Senses.

Now this Breach, according to the Rule

we have established, ought to be interpreted of such a Subversion of the Religion, Laws, Government and publick Peace of the *Jews*, as *Daniel* knew before was to happen. This, in a manner, fixes it down to that which we are told in the preceeding Chapter, was that very Year revealed to him; and which we have described in the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and from the 20th to the 26th Verses of that Chapter. *And out of one of them, &c.* Now this Prophecy is, I think, by all explained of the Persecution begun by *Antiochus Epiphanes*; to which it is confined by a great Number of different Characters. And that it has some Relation to the present Prophecy may be further proved from this, That both are revealed by the same Angel, (*Dan. ix. 21.*) and the Subject of this last Vision seems only a Continuation of the former; and that it is said to happen in *the last End of the Indignation, for at the Time appointed the End should be.* Now by the *Time of Indignation* here is meant that Term of Years, or the seventy Weeks during which the *Jews* should suffer the Punishment of their Defection. And accordingly, this Prophecy is made to extend *even until the Consummation, and that determined should be poured upon the Desolate.* And as this particular Event must

have fallen within the seventy Weeks, so it could not happen till near the End of them. Nor indeed was there any remarkable Change in the State of the *Jews* from their Return till this Time.

The History of this terrible Persecution, which was more dangerous to the *Jewish* Church, and by which their Religion seemed nearer being extirpated, than even by the *Babylonish* Captivity, or the final Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, is given us at large in the two Books of *Maccabees*, and History of *Josephus*: with which every Reader has easy Access to be acquainted, and where he will find all that we know of these Times; and therefore may be fully qualified to judge of the Application of this Prophecy. There he will find that, after *Onias* the third was, by the treacherous Practices of *Simon* the Protector of the Temple, banished *Jerusalem*, his Brother *Jesus* who, in Compliment to the *Greeks*, changed his Name to *Jason*, bought the High-priesthood of the *Syrian* King: And at the same Time Time erected a *Gymnasium*, or publick Place of Exercise in Imitation of the *Greeks*, near the Temple; which corrupted the *Jews* greatly, making them neglect, and even despise the religious Rites and other Customs of their Country, and in all things imitate those

those of the *Greeks*. After this *Menelaus*, whom *Josephus* calls *Jason's* Brother, tho' the Author of the *Maccabees* makes him a *Benjamite*, and no way allied to the Priesthood, by giving a greater Price, and promising to make the *Jews* come entirely into the *Greek* Religion, purchased the Priesthood. This raised two Factions in *Judea*, which being both headed by the Rival High-priests, Men of the most cruel and wicked Dispositions, brought the greatest Miseries on that Country. Till *Menelaus*, to support his Authority by the same Power that gave it, perswaded *Antiochus* to invade *Judea*; where taking *Jerusalem*, he killed of the Inhabitants forty thousand in three Days time, and sold as many for Slaves. Then after having polluted the Temple, by entring into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkling all with Swine's Blood, he robbed it of all its Riches and sacred Vessels. Sometime after this, he sent *Apollonius* who, falling upon the *Jews* on their Sabbath-day, slaughtered all he could, without any Mercy or Regard to Age or Sex, gave the Plunder of the City to his Soldiers, set Fire to it in several Places, and razed the Walls to the Ground; so that it became quite desolate for some Time. Then he built a Fortress upon Mount *Acra*, which, overlooking the Temple, put

an

an End to all the Sacrifices and Temple-worship, the Soldiers of the Garrison killing whoever attempted to enter it. Nor was this all, for *Antiochus* made a Decree, by which all Observances of the *Mosaick* Law were forbid under Pain of Death ; the Heathen-worship was established in *Judea* ; the Temple itself was dedicated to *Jupiter Olympius* ; all Copies of the Law were destroyed, Mothers who had circumcised their Children, were hanged with those Children tied to their Necks ; and all, who would not eat Swine's Flesh sacrificed to Heathen Gods, were butchered and tortured in the cruellest Manner. And in all this the greatest Part of the *Jewish* Nation either complied through Inclination, or submitted thro' Fear.

In this Condition the *Jews* were when *Judas Maccabæus* appeared : and though he recovered the City and Temple, and restored the divine Worship, which both he and his Brother *Jonathan*, who succeeded him, maintained with the greatest Resolution and Conduct ; yet the Design of extirpating their Nation and Religion was not laid aside, and the *Syrian* Empire seemed always ready to swallow them up, whenever its full Strength, which was so far superior to theirs, should be turned against them, which the State of their
Affairs

Affairs would not allow at that Time. The Fort in the middle of *Jerusalem*, and many others throughout the Country, still continued as Bridles in their Mouths. They had no established legal Government, being at War with the Kings of *Syria*, who were their Civil Heads. They had no High-priest; for *Menelaus*, who bore that Name, neither was acknowledged by the People, nor officiated as such: And after he had suffered the just Reward of his Crimes, the Office was again prostituted, and given to *Alcimus*, who was as wicked, had as little Right, and was as little acknowledged as his Predecessor: And when he died, the Office continued quite vacant for seven Years.

Now this is the Breach upon the Constitution, Government, Religion and Laws of the *Jews* mentioned in our Text, and so often prophecied of in *Daniel*. And this Breach was, by a very unexpected Turn of Affairs, repaired all at once; and the *Jews* restored in one Year's Time, from all this Misery and Danger, to a State of greater Freedom, and more Honour than they enjoyed before the War began. This happened in the eighth Year after *Jonathan* became Leader of the *Jews*, the 160th of the *Seleucian Era*, and the 153d before Christ. For then *Alexander Balas*, an Impostor, pre-

pretending to be the Son of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, claimed the *Syrian* Crown; and being supported by the Kings of *Pergamus*, *Cappadocia* and *Egypt*, and owned by the *Romans*, and great Numbers, dissatisfied with the present Government, deserting to him, made War upon *Demetrius* the King. In this Exigence, both the Competitors, seeing of what Importance it was to secure the Friendship of *Jonathan* and the *Jews*, endeavoured to outbid one another in their Grants of Immunities to the People, and Honours to *Jonathan*. *Demetrius* constituted him his General in *Judea*; restored all the Captives that were disperst through his Kingdom; gave up the Hostages that were kept in the Fortress at *Jerusalem*; yielded up his Authority over that Fortress; remitted most of the Taxes to the *Jews*; and added three Governments out of *Samaria* and *Galilee*, together with *Ptolemais*, to their Country; allowed the free Exercise of their Religion in all his Dominions; promised to contribute to the Expences of repairing the City and Temple; made the Temple a Sanctuary, and appointed 20,000 Shekels of Silver to be paid yearly out of the King's Revenue for its Service. But *Alexander* giving *Jonathan* the High-priesthood, he chose rather to make an Alliance with him; and accordingly

ingly, after he, proving victorious, was settled in the Kingdom, continued in great Friendship and Honour with him, being put into Offices of Trust, and receiving several Places of Importance in *Palestine*.

By this sudden Revolution, *Jonathan* gained an absolute Authority in his Country. Those who were before kept in Awe, by having their Children and near Relations in the Hands of the *Syrians* as Hostages, joined him; the apostate *Jews* submitted; and the Enemy deserted all the Garrisons except those of *Jerusalem* and *Bethsura*. Then *Jonathan* began to live at *Jerusalem*, for he had resided in *Mispeh* before, as we are told, *1 Maccab. x. 10, 11*. This done, *Jonathan* settled himself in *Jerusalem*, and began to build and repair the City. And he commanded the Workmen to build the Walls and the Mount Zion round about with square Stones for Fortification, and they did so. Then the Strangers that were in the Fortresses which *Bacchides* had built fled away. So that, whether we explain the Breach metaphorically of the Persecution, or literally of the Wall, this Year the Prophecy had its Completion. And in this very Year the sixty two Weeks, from the Time *Daniel* saw the Vision, were completed. For betwixt the Year in which

H

Cyrus

Cyrus took *Babylon*, and the *Jews* returned, which was the 538, and this the 153, there are 385: To which add the forty nine Years or seven Weeks before, it makes 434, which are precisely sixty two Weeks.

The last thing contained in this Part of the Prophecy is, That, *after threescore and two Weeks the Messiah* (or anointed) *should be cut off, but not for himself*. Now to trace out the Meaning of this, in the same Manner as we have done in the rest, we must examine what Idea *Daniel* would conceive of it. We have already observed that this Epithet *the Anointed*, could only be given to the Kings or High priests; the Supreme Civil, or Supreme Ecclesiastical Magistrate among the *Jews*. But *Daniel* knew there was to be no supreme Civil Magistrate or King among the *Jews*, while they were subject to a foreign Power; therefore he could understand it of none but the High-priest. And as it is a general Epithet, it may as well be applied to a Line of High-priests, as to any single Person; so as to signify the anointed Line, and not the anointed High-priest; and that *Daniel* would take it in this Sense is most probable, as he knew it was of far greater Importance to the *Jewish* State (for changing the Succession to the High-priesthood, was as great a Revolution among the *Jews*, as chang-

changing the Succession to the Crown in a hereditary Monarchy; and even greater, as the High-priest was not only the chief Civil Magistrate, but the Institutions of their Religion and Law, which established the Succession, were concerned) and as he was acquainted with the Pontifical Line, but knew nothing of the Person in whom it should end. This Interpretation is favoured likewise by the Septuagint; for there it is not translated *the Anointed*, but *the Anointment* or *Unction*, which applies better to a Race of High priests, than to a single Man; especially if we suppose only the first of a Line was anointed. Nevertheless, whether this Epithet be applied to the pontifical Line, or a particular High-priest, the Prophecy will be found literally fulfilled. For from that very Year 153, in which the sixty two Weeks expired, the Line of *Jozadak*, which from the Re-establishment of the *Jews*, had possessed the Priesthood for near 400 Years, were excluded from it forever, and that in a manner that agrees exactly with this Text.

For *Onias* the Son of that *Onias*, who was first expelled *Judea*, and then murdered by the Enemies of his Religion and Country, having been obliged to fly from the Persecution into *Egypt*, when he saw the Pontificate, which was his by Right of Succession,

and the Laws of his Country, settled upon *Jonathan*, and no Hopes of ever recovering it, procured a Licence from the King of *Egypt* to build a Temple there like that in *Jerusalem*, and to have the Priesthood in it settled upon himself and his Posterity forever. The Argument he used to persuade the King was, That, *Judea* now belonging to the Kingdom of *Syria*, it was his Interest that the *Jews*, who were his Subjects, should not be obliged to go up every Year to *Jerusalem*, which might alienate them from his Government, and bring them under a Dependance upon the *Syrian* Kings. This Temple he built, the fourth Year after *Jonathan* was made High-priest: And by this means he not only excluded himself and Posterity from the High-priest's Office at *Jerusalem*; but likewise cut off himself and all the *Egyptian Jews* from their Country, and the original Stock of their Nation. For all *Jewish* Males being obliged by their Law to present themselves once a Year at the Temple in *Jerusalem*; and all the *Jews* throughout the World, making it the *Kebla* to which they directed their Prayers; it served as a general Bond connecting all of the *Jewish* Nation together, how much soever they were dispersed through the World: And therefore when any Part of them changed
their

their Place of Worship, this common Bond of Union with their Nation was broke. Not to mention that the Temple at *Jerusalem* was the Place chosen by God himself to dwell in; and that no *Jews* could, without a manifest Breach of a fundamental Part of their Religion, set up any other Place of Worship: and therefore it never was done after the Captivity except in this Instance.

The *Hebrew* Word that is here interpreted *cut off*, signifies properly *lopt off*, as a Branch from a Tree; or *cut off*, as a Member is separated from an animal Body, and is metaphorically used to express *Divorces* and *Excommunications*: in all which Senses it may very well be applied to the Separation of *Onias* and his Adherents from the Body of the *Jews*.

The remaining Part of the original Text in this Place seems imperfect; for what is translated in our Bibles, *but not for himself*, is only when translated into *Latin*, for it cannot well be render'd into *English*, & *non erit ei*. This has been very differently supplied: some adding *culpa* or *peccatum*; some *judicium*; some *populus*; some *auxilium*; so as to make the Sense, *The Fault or Sin shall not be his*; or, *it shall not be for himself*; or, *the Judgment shall be no longer his*; or, *they shall be*

be no longer his People; or, there shall be none to assist him. The Truth of it is, there is no Reason in the Original itself for translating it in any one of those Ways more than another. But in all these several Senses it agrees well enough with the Case of *Onias*. For it might justly enough be said of him and his Family, That *the Jews should be no longer their People*, and that they should no longer possess the Office of supreme Judges, which at that Time belonged to the Highpriests: Nor was there any Party or Faction among the *Jews* to assist them in recovering their Country, Office and Birth-right. And it might as justly be said, That it was *not for himself; (or itself, if applied to the Pontifical Line)* not upon account of any Wickedness in him that he was thus excluded: for he was a Man of a very good Character, serving a long Time as prime Minister to the King of *Egypt*, which Office he discharged with singular Fidelity and Wisdom. It could only be for the Wickedness of his two Brothers, who might be thought to have forfeited all Title to the Priesthood, not only for themselves, but all of the same Race, by their Defection from the Law of God. Tho' indeed it was not in their Right, but that of his Father, he claimed the Succession.

It

It is possible this very Prophecy was the Thing that induced the People to consent to *Jonathan's* assuming the Pontifical Robes, to which he had no Right, in prejudice of the true Heir: for *Jonathan* appears to have been no way related to the Pontifical Family. It is true, he was a Priest of the Course of *Joarib*, which was the first; but this proves nothing; for when these Courses were first appointed by *David*, their Order was established by Lot, and not by their Proximity to the Line of Highpriests. Besides, the Course of *Joarib* was one of those that never returned from the Captivity; for, of the 24 Courses, four only returned; and these were, the 2d, of which the Family of *Jozadack* seems to have been, the 3d, the 5th, and the 16th. These four indeed were, upon their Return, divided into Four and twenty, who bore the same Names with the ancient Courses. But this was probably done by Lot likewise. Therefore though it is only a Conjecture, yet it is probable that, as *Onias* made use of a Prophecy in *Isaiah*, (*Is.* xix. 18, 19.) to persuade the *Egyptian Jews* to consent to his building the new Temple; so that *Jonathan* would make use of this Prophecy to induce the People to acknowledge him as Highpriest.

S E C T. IV.

ALL that remains now is the *third* and *last* Part of this Prophecy, which contains a particular Description of a very bloody Persecution against the City, Sanctuary, and Religion of *Daniel's* People: *And the People of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof shall be with a Flood, and unto the End of the War Desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one Week, and in the Midst of the Week he shall cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease; and for the Overspreading of Abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the Consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

The Time when this should happen is not expressly mentioned in these Words; but *Daniel* would very naturally understand the Consummation and End of the War, and of the Destruction of the City and Sanctuary, to be the same that must have preceded the repairing the Street and the Breach, foretold in the former Part of the Prophecy: which serves sufficiently to ascertain the Time; and where there are sufficient *data*
from

from which a Thing may be deduced, it is not agreeable to the Nature of Prophecy to mention it in exprefs Terms. This, in a Manner, nails it down to that Persecution begun by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, which immediately preceded the End of the 62 Weeks, and the Reparation of the Street and the Breach. And indeed there is no other Persecution either within the 70 Weeks; as this must have been, or at any other Time that can agree with this Description. But this will appear more evident, when we consider how this Prophecy was fulfilled, and how it agrees in all Characters and Circumstances with these other Prophecies of *Daniel*, which are allowed by all to relate to this Persecution.

First of all then, it is evident to every one that reads the History of these Times, that the People of *Antiochus*, or the Army commanded by *Apollonius*, when they invaded *Judea*, destroyed the City and the Sanctuary; and that their End or Destruction was like a Flood or Torrent, impetuous, irresistible, and diffusing itself over all. That *Antiochus* made a Covenant with many of the *Jews*; that he caused the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease; that he set up his own Idols, which are called the Idols of the Desolator, upon the Battlements of *Jerusalem*.

rusalem; or, if we follow the other Reading, that he made the City and Temple *desolate, for the overspreading of Abominations*, by which Word the Idols of the Heathens are generally meant: thus *Ashtoreth* is called *the Abomination of the Sidonians*, *Chemosh the Abomination of the Moabites*, and *Milcom the Abomination of the Children of Ammon*, (2 Kings xxiii. 13. 1 Kings xi. 7.) Now all these are plain Facts related in the History of the *Maccabees*, and such as never happened at any other Time. Nay in the History they happen to be exprest almost in the same Words that are used in the Prophecy. Thus in 1 *Maccab.* i. 54. we are told, *Now the fifteenth Day of the Month Casleu, in the hundred and forty fifth Year, they set up the Abomination of Desolation upon the Altar, and builded Idol-altars throughout the Cities of Judah on every Side.*

But the Intention of this Prophecy is not only to foretel future Events, but to determine their Chronology and Dates: and this requires next to be examined. *The Prince then*, it is said, *should confirm a Covenant with many for one Week, and in the Midst (or Half-part) of the Week he should cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease.* Now this must be interpreted of such a Covenant
as

as had some Connection and Influence upon the Events foretold, and the Actions the Prince was to do; the Destruction of the City and Sanctuary, and causing the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease. And such a Covenant it was which *Antiochus Epiphanes* made with *Menelaus* and the *Jews* of his Party. For after *Menelaus* had bought the High-priesthood, and returned to *Jerusalem* to enter upon his Office, *Jason*, who was still in Possession of it, and the greatest Part of the *Jews* made such strong Opposition to him, that, after contending with them some time, he and all his Adherents were at last obliged to fly from *Judea* to *Antioch*. There, to engage the King more heartily to espouse their Quarrel, they promised to bring over the Nation of the *Jews* from their own Religion and Laws, and establish among them those of the *Greeks*. Upon these Terms they agreed, *Antiochus* to restore them to their Country, and support *Menelaus's* Title; and *Menelaus* with his Adherents to make the *Jews* follow the *Greek* Customs. In consequence of which Treaty, *Menelaus* was sent back to *Jerusalem* with such a Force as *Jason* could make no Head against; who therefore fled to the *Ammonites*: and *Menelaus*, to execute his Promise, made use of all the Arts of Promises and Threatnings, to

induce as many of the *Jews* as he could to apostatize. And it was chiefly to put the Things stipulated by this Covenant in Execution that *Antiochus* began his Persecution of the *Jews*.

This then was the Beginning of the Covenant, to cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease; and it had as clear a Termination, when *Judas Maccabeus* recovering the Temple, and destroying the Idols that were placed in it, purified and restored it to its former Sanctity and Use. To which we may add the Repentance of *Antiochus* upon the Approach of Death, the Order he left to put an End to the Persecution of the *Jews*, and the Punishment of his Crimes by his violent Death, all which happened very soon after. (See 2 *Maccab.* Chap. ix.) And this was just seven Years after the Covenant was made betwixt *Antiochus* and *Menelaus*.

For this Agreement was made in the 141st Year of the *Syro-Macedonian* Æra, or the 172d before Christ; and the City was retaken, and the Temple purified in the ninth Month of the 148th, and the 165th Years of the same Æras. And though we are not expressly told at what Time of the Year *Menelaus* first made that Promise; yet there are Circumstances that may, with Probability

lity at least, determine it to the same Time. For *Menelaus* was sent in the same Year by *Jason* to transact some Affairs with the King, and staid so long at *Antioch* till, by his Intrigues, he obtained that the Grant of the High Priesthood, given but three Years before, and by the same King to *Jason*, should be recalled, and that Office bestowed upon himself. After this, as he expected Opposition from *Jason* and the People of the *Jews*, some Time was requisite to form his Party, and prepare them for supporting him, before he could attempt to enter upon his Office, or even return to *Jerusalem*. And when he did come to *Jerusalem*, there was a Contention maintained betwixt his Party and *Jason* for some time; till he being worsted, was obliged to fly to *Antioch*: And at that time it was he made the Covenant with that King. Now making proper Allowances for the Course of these Transactions, this could not well happen before the ninth Month. Nor could it happen any considerable Time after it; For before the End of that Year, he having procured a sufficient Force from *Antiochus*, returned to *Jerusalem*, chased away *Jason*, and entred upon the Office of High Priest: So that this evidently falling so near the same Time of Year with the Purification, we need not scruple

scruple to affirm there was an exact Week or seven Years betwixt them; that is, betwixt the Prince's confirming the Covenant with many for the Destruction of the City and Sanctuary, and causing the daily Sacrifice and Oblation to cease, and their Restoration by *Judas*.

The other Period of Time mentioned in this Part of the Prophecy will require much less Computation, as we have the express Testimony of History to ascertain it. For *Josephus*, in three several Places, informs us, that the daily Sacrifice was interrupted for three Years and a half; which is precisely the half Part of a Week, as it is called in the Text: And that the three Years and a half must have begun in the midst of the Week, appears from this, that they end at the same Time with the Week, when *Judas* purified the Temple; for from that Time the daily Sacrifice was restored.

We see then how far the Justness of our Interpretation may be made evident from the Agreement of the Prophecy with the History in its Completion. There still remains another Way to examine the Truth of it; by comparing this with other Prophecies that are allowed by all to be accomplished in this Persecution of the *Jewish* Church. These Prophecies are, the Vision of the Ram and the

the He-goat, which we have related in the 8th Chapter, where the Part belonging to *Antiochus Epiphanes* is from the 9th to the 15th Verse, and from the 23d to the 26th; the Vision contained in the 10th, 11th and 12th Chapters, of which that Part which relates to this Event, is from the 21st Verse of the 11th Chapter to the End of the Book. And, in my Opinion, the 24th, 25th, &c. Verses of the 7th Chapter, should be referred to the same Times. Now in all these Predictions there is such an exact Agreement with the last Part of this Prophecy, not only in the Events foretold, and their Chronology, but even in the Expression and Language, that I can see no Foundation for doubting that they all belong to the same Period of Time.

In this last Part of our Prophecy there are three things foretold; That the People of the Prince that should come should destroy the City and the Sanctuary, or State and Church of the *Jews*; That he should confirm a Covenant with many; and that he should cause the daily Sacrifice and Oblation to cease. Now all the same things are foretold in the other Prophecies. That a Prince should arise, who should *wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change Times* (or religious Rites and Festivals) *and Laws*; and

and that they should be given into his Hands;—That the Place of his (the Prince of the Hosts) Sanctuary should be cast down;—That the Sanctuary should be trodden under Foot;—That the King should destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise, and destroy the mighty, and the holy People;—That with the Arms of a Flood (the same Metaphor used in this Prophecy) they should be overflowed from before him, and be broken—That Arms should stand on his Part, and they should pollute the Sanctuary of Strength;—That the People of God should fall by the Sword and by Flame, by Captivity and by Spoil many Days,—even to the Time of the End, &c. And the Covenant he confirmed with many, is expressly mentioned, Chap. xi. xxiii. And after the League made with him he shall work deceitfully. And in Verse 30. He shall have Indignation against the holy Covenant; so shall he do. he shall even return and have Intelligence with them that forsake the holy Covenant. And the Design and Consequence of this Covenant is express in the next Verse; And Arms shall stand on his Part, and they shall pollute the Sanctuary of Strength, and shall take away the daily Sacrifice, and they shall place the Abomination that maketh desolate.

late. And the Time during which the daily Sacrifice should be made to cease, is particularly specified. In *Chap. xii. 11.* the Angel tells *Daniel*; *From the Time that the daily Sacrifice shall be taken away, and the Abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety Days*, which is only twelve Days more than three Years and a half; and what follows, *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the one thousand three hundred and thirty five Days*, must be stretcht till the Time that *Antiochus*, by his Death, and the Order he left behind him, abolished the Persecution, and put an End to the imminent Danger of the *Jewish* Religion. Which Numbers being given *Daniel* as an Interpretation of what he had heard in the 6th and 7th Verses, is a clear Proof that the Phrase of *a Time, Times, and an half* there mentioned, is to be understood of the same Period, three Years and an half: A Time signifying a Year; Times, two Years; and an half of a Time, half a Year. And as we find the same Phrase used in the Vision of the four Beasts, *Chap. vii. 25.* where it is said, “ That the Times and Laws should
 “ be given into the Hands of the King, un-
 “ till a Time and Times, and the dividing
 “ of Time;” it plainly shews that this Pro-
 K phecy

phesy too relates to the same Event. For in these three different manners is this one Period measured; by half a Week, by the Number of Days, and the prophetick Expression of a Time, Times and a half; which all amount to three Years and a half, and agree exactly with History.

There is another Period mentioned in *Chap.* viii. 13. and 14. of two thousand three hundred Days, during which the Sanctuary and the Host should be troden under Foot. These Days amount to some more than six Years, and must correspond to the Week for which the Prince was to confirm the Covenant with many; only with this Difference, that, as the Week is reckoned from the Time the Covenant was first made, this Period must be computed from the Time it began to be executed, by the Violence and Robberies of *Menelaus*: for till then they could not be said to be troden under Foot. I shall say nothing further of the Resemblance betwixt all these Prophecies in the Expressions, as I am satisfied what is already suggested is sufficient to shew they predict the same Event. And indeed it has always been a convincing Argument to me, that this Prophecy should be understood of that Persecution in the Times of *Antiochus*; that all the other Prophecies of *Daniel* so plainly terminate

nate, and by their particular Description of this Persecution, seem chiefly designed to foretell it.

Thus have I finished the Interpretation of this Prophecy; in which the Reader may observe, I have carefully avoided entangling him in critical Observations upon the original Text, of which few are qualified to judge. I have sometimes indeed made use of the various Readings and Interpretations, acknowledged by the best Translators; but never built any thing upon them that might not be deduced from the Translation that is generally received.

I have always explained the Text according to its most natural and simple Signification. For where Recourse is had to figurative, mystick or allegorical Senses; we find by Experience such ingenious Men, as have employed their Pens upon this Subject, are able out of any thing to deduce any Scheme they please.

I flatter myself likewise this Interpretation is more agreeable to the Context, the Occasion of the Vision, and the Prophet's Conceptions; which have been things little regarded by others.

I have built nothing upon Conjectures, excepting perhaps in fixing the precise Times

of the Year, but all upon some kind of Testimony or Argument.

And upon the whole, I cannot help thinking, the Coincidence of so many different Calculations must be a convincing Proof of their Justness; as it cannot be imagined they should agree so exactly by Chance: And this is an Evidence other Schemes in a great measure want. In the Scheme we have given, the Time the *Jews* were under kingly Government, the Time they served foreign Nations, and the seventy Weeks agree; the seven Weeks and the sixty two Weeks are computed from the same *Æra*, and coincide; and the one Week and half Week are likewise connected together. So that all these different Numbers are mutual Checks upon one another; in so much, that if any one Calculation should fail, all the rest would fall to the Ground.

S E C T. V.

THE Reader may now recollect, That there is one thing still which we took for granted, and requires now to be proved; as indeed all our Calculations are founded upon it. It is the Beginning of the seventy Years Captivity; which we have placed, contrary to the Opinion of most Commentators,

tators, at the entire Desolation of the Land in the 23d of *Nebuchadnezzar*. This Question then we shall just now examine, by following the same Method we have hitherto done, that is, by deducing all the Arguments necessary to determine it from Scripture and the *Jewish* Historians.

To understand this, the Reader must remember there were four different Invasions of *Judea* by the *Babylonians*; the first in the third and fourth of *Jehoiakim*; the second, seven or eight Years after, when *Jechoniah* was carried away Captive; the third happened in the 18th or 19th of *Nebuchadnezzar*, when *Zedekiah* was taken, and the City and Temple destroyed; the last was in the 23d of the same Reign, when all the Inhabitants were carried Captive to *Babylon*, and the whole Land left entirely desolate. Now at some one of those Periods must the Commencement of the 70 Years Captivity be placed. But though every one of the three first of these Periods has been chosen by several Men of Learning and Character, I shall take little Notice of any but the fourth of *Jehoiakim*: because that Opinion, seeming to agree with the Reigns of the *Babylonian* Kings, has been supported by the Authority of that Chronology; and is therefore adopted by all those who are best

acquainted with the eastern Antiquities. But the 70 Years, even though we reckon them from that Period, do not entirely agree with that Chronology. For betwixt the first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, which coincides with the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, and the first of *Cyrus*, where the Captivity ends, is only 66 Years, according to the Catalogue of *Babylonian* Kings, called *Ptolemy's* Canon. The remaining four Years they supply in different Ways: some say the first Year of *Nebuchadnezzar*, mentioned in Scripture, is the first he reigned in Partnership with his Father, which they suppose was four Years before he reigned alone. Others suppose it was only two Years, for there is no Authority for one of these Opinions more than the other; and, to make out the rest, ascribe a Reign of two Years, after the taking of *Babylon*, to *Cyrus's* supposed Uncle *Cyaxares*, whom they make the same with *Daniel's* *Darius* the *Mede*. But it is not my Business just now to enter into an Examination of these chronological Points, that I may perhaps do afterwards. At present I propose to confine our Enquiry to the Testimony of the *Jewish* Writings, as the only proper and sufficient Evidence to determine this Question: and I wish the Gentlemen, who differ from us, had not rested entirely
on

on the Authority of this Chronology, but supported their Opinion by some Arguments drawn from Scripture : as it, is I know of no Proofs adduced by them that require a particular Answer. All we can do is only to shew, That it is not agreeable to the Scripture-history, or the Characters given of the Captivity to begin it at that Period, and that we have several Reasons to begin it where we do. This Opinion however is the strongest we have to encounter. That which fixes it at the Time *Jeconiah* was taken, as it agrees with no established Chronology, has less to support it. Besides, it is so often mentioned in Scripture under the Title of the Captivity of *Jehoiachin*, as distinct from the Captivity of the Land, that I think it may be considered as out of the Question. And all the Arguments brought for placing it at the burning of the Temple and City, conclude much stronger when applied to our Scheme.

The original Prophecy of the 70 Years Captivity we have in the twenty fifth of *Jeremiah* ; *Behold, I will send and take all the Families of the North, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon my Servant, and will bring them against this Land, and against the Inhabitants thereof, and against all these Nations*

ons round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an Astonishment, and an Hissing and perpetual Desolation.— And this whole Land shall be a Desolation and an Astonishment, and these Nations shall serve the King of Babylon seventy Years.

This Prophecy must have been delivered after *Nebuchadnezzar* had taken *Jerusalem*, and *Jehoiakim* become his Vassal. For *Nebuchadnezzar* besieged *Jerusalem* in the third Year of *Jehoiakim*, (*Dan. i. 1.*) and probably took it in the Beginning of the fourth. Now it evidently was not delivered in the Time of the Siege, for it is said, *I will send and take*; but after *Nebuchadnezzar*, hearing of his Father's Death, had returned to *Babylon* to enter upon the Kingdom: when the *Jews* probably flattered themselves with the Hopes he would never return; as they afterwards did in *Zedekiah's* Time. Besides, it must have been near the End of the Year, to make it the three and twentieth Year, as it is called *Y. 3.* from the 13th of *Josiah*.

But not to insist upon this; what happened then does not in the least agree with the Description of this Captivity, either in this original Prophecy of it, or in other Places where it is mentioned, as in the Beginning
of

of this Chapter of *Daniel*.—*I Daniel understood by Books the Number of the Years, whereof the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy Years in the Desolations of Jerusalem: And at the End of the second Book of Chronicles, To fulfil the Word of the Lord by the Mouth of Jeremiah, until the Land had enjoyed her Sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten Years.*

Now I dare venture to affirm, that we have not the least Reason to believe there was any Captivity at all, or Desolation of the Land that Year: all that we are told of it in the History of Kings is, That in the Days of Jehoiakim Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his Servant three Years; and in Chronicles, Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, and bound him in Fetters to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the Vessels of the House of the Lord to Babylon, and put them in his Temple at Babylon. Tho' this most probably happened after his Rebellion, and at the End of his Reign: for he never went to *Babylon*; but seems to have died while in Chains, and to have been

L

cast

cast out without Burial, at the Gates of the City, by *Nebuchadnezzar*. (See *Jer.* xxi. 18; 19. and *Ezek.* xix. 8, 9.) But what seems most favourable to their Opinion is, what we find in the Beginning of *Daniel*; *In the third Year of the Reign of Jeboiakim King of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jeboiakim King of Judah into his Hands, with Part of the Vessels of the House of God, which he carried into the Land of Shinar, to the House of his God, and he brought the Vessels into the Treasure-house of his God; and the King spoke unto Ashpenaz the Master of his Eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the Children of Israel, and of the Kings Seed, and of the Princes. Children in whom was no Blemish, &c.*

In this Passage there are only two Things mentioned; neither of which could affect the Nation or State of the *Jews*, so as in the least Degree to answer the Description of the Captivity. The first was making some of the Children of highest Rank Eunuchs: Of these there could be but a very few qualified by their Age and Form; and they seem to have been taken only to gratify the *Babylonish* King's Pride, who considered it as
a Piece

a Piece of Equipage to have Servants of Royal Blood, or perhaps to serve as Hostages of the Fidelity of the *Jewish* Nobles. The other is, taking away Part of the Vessels of the Lord's House: And of these the Number and Value could not be considerable; as the greatest Part were afterwards carried away with *Jehoiakim*, and when the Temple was burnt by *Nebuzaradan*. It must be a strong Argument too; that in all the subsequent History and Prophecies, there never is the least Mention of any Captivity in *Jehoiakim's* Time. The Captivity of *Jecooniab*, and the Vessels transported with him to *Babylon* are often spoken of; this Captivity is made an Æra, the Captives compared as a distinct Body with those left at *Jerusalem*, and Letters and Prophecies sent to them by *Jeremiah*: but never the least Notice taken of any Captivity or Captives before. Nor can it be supposed that *Ezekiel* would date his Revelations from the 18th of *Josiah*, and from the Captivity of *Jehoiachin*, one of which happened before, and the other after this Time, if the 70 Years Captivity had begun then: Especially as, after the Destruction of the City, he chuses that for his Æra. Besides, the most Part of *Jeremiah's*, and all *Ezekiel's* Prophecies, foretelling the Calamities of the *Jews*, and their

Captivity, were delivered after this Time. And in the 27th of *Jeremiah*, the same Prophecy that had been delivered in the Beginning of *Jehoiakim's* Reign, is repeated in *Zedekiah's*, as not yet fulfilled. Add to this, that in the last Chapter of the same Book, where the Number of People made Captives at different Times is given, there is no Mention of any this Year.

In short, whoever will compare the slight Account given in the Sacred History of the Transactions in *Jehoiakim's* Time, with the particular Description of what past when *Jehoiachin* was made Prisoner, or *Jerusalem* was sack'd, will see it represented as of no great Moment to the Nation of the *Jews*, and far from being considered as the Execution of that terrible Judgment so often threatned against them by the Prophets. All that we can gather from it is, That *Jerusalem* was besieged, and, after a short Resistance, taken; and that *Jehoiakim* swore Fealty to the King of *Babylon*, and became his Vassal for three Years, after which he rebelled. But it was not till after this Rebellion, that the neighbouring Nations made Inroads into *Judea*, and harassed it in that miserable Manner described 2 *Kings* xxiv. 2. till they had seized the King, and delivered him in Chains to *Nebuchadnezzar*. These Nations are said

said to be sent against *Judah*, to execute God's threatned Judgments upon it. *Surely at the Commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his Sight.* (See likewise 2 *Kings* xxiv. 20.) So that this was only the Beginning of those Judgments, and that War which at last ended in removing the People out of the Land which God had given: And this did not happen till the 7th or 8th Year of *Jeboiakim*.

But even after all this, if we lay aside the Consideration of their being more exposed to the Miseries of War from their Neighbours, there seems to have been extremely little Change made upon the State of the *Jews*, excepting that they became subject to the *Babylonians* instead of the *Egyptians*; for as their whole Confidence was in the King of *Egypt*, if they had repelled the *Babylonians* by his Assistance, they must have been subject to him. We hear of no *Babylonish* Governor set over them; no Forts built, nor Soldiers sent to keep them in Awe; they still retained their own Kings, Priests, and Officers of State; their Religion, Government and Laws were left entire; none of their Cities were burnt, nor their Fortifications razed; nor do we so much as hear of any Tax imposed upon them. Insomuch that they were left in a Capacity to take up Arms
and

and maintain long Wars with the *Babylonians* themselves. In short, they still continued a Nation, a Body politick and Church, in Possession of their own Cities, Country and Laws; and while they were so, their State does not agree with the Representations of the Captivity.

Nor is it at all consistent with the Circumstances of the Times and History, to imagine that *Nebuchadnezzar* would then behave with so great Severity towards that People. The Kings of *Judah*, we must remember, had been in a strict Alliance with the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians* ever since the Time *Manasseh* returned from his Captivity: And the *Assyrian* Kings had annexed all the Land possess'd by the *Israelites* to the Dominions of *Judah*. What Engagements the *Jewish* Kings brought themselves under in Return for this Gift is no where told: But it was in consequence of this Alliance, that *Josiah* thought himself oblig'd to oppose the King of *Egypt* in his Expedition against the *Babylonish* Dominions, tho' his own Territories were not attack'd, by which he lost his Life. And if Conjectures may be allowed, the People of the *Jews* seem to have testified their Affection to their old Allies, in passing over the next Heir, because he inclin'd to favour the *Egyptians*, as afterwards ap-

appeared in his Reign; and making his younger Brother King, because more a Friend to the *Babylonians*. Thus much is certain at least, that the one was suspected, and therefore dethroned and carried Captive by the *Egyptians*; while the other was favoured and placed on the Throne.

For at that Time, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians*, contending for the Empire of the neighbouring Nations, had given Rise to two different Factions among the *Jews*. The King, and most Part of those who were the Politicians and concerned in the Government, seem to have inclined to submit to the King of *Egypt*; whether because his Grandeur and Power, being a nearer Object, struck them more; or because they thought him more in a Capacity, as being nearer, to defend them from the Assaults of the neighbouring Nations. But all those who had entered into the Measures and Views of *Josiah's* Court, were for continuing faithful to the *Assyrians*, as *Josiah* had done: And that perhaps, from a Regard to the Obligations of the former Alliance; from a Confidence in what the Prophets said, who were in the same Interest; from a Belief it was the Will of God they should serve the King of *Babylon*, which is so often and warmly recommended by *Jeremiah*, with all Promises

ses of Happiness if they obeyed, and Misery if they did not; and from a Concern too for their Religion, which they imagined would suffer less among the Eastern Nations, who were for the most Part of the Magian Sect, than among the idolatrous and superstitious *Egyptians*. In which they judged very right, as appears by the Event: For after the Captivity, when they had got more into the Taste and Views of the Magian Philosophy, they never once made a national Defection to idolatrous Worship. That this was the State of Affairs at that Time, appears from the frequent Leagues the Kings entred into with *Egypt*; and the Exclamations of the Prophets, particularly *Jeremiah*, against them: And that though *Jeremiah* was often accused, thrown into Prison, and in Danger of being put to Death, for being in the Interest of the *Chaldeans*, disheartning the Soldiers and People, and endeavouring to fall off to the Enemy; yet he was always rescued by the Interest of *Abikam* the Son of that *Shaphan* the Scribe, who had been chief Minister of State in the Reign of *Josiah*. (*See Jerem. xxvi. 24.*) And this *Abikam* himself too had been a considerable Man in the same Reign, (*2 Kings xxii. 12, 14.*) and was now Head of the Faction that favoured the *Babylonians*,
and

and of great Power, by his Connections with *Elasab*, *Gemaria*, and *Jaazaniah* President of the *Sanhedrim* his Brothers, and *Micaiah* his Nephew, who were all in the highest Posts of the Government; and by his Influence over the People, who seem to have been generally in the same Interest. For when the Priests and Court-Prophets would have killed *Jeremiah*, he was, in direct Opposition to the Court, saved by this *Abikam*; and the Princes and Elders of the People, and all the People declared for him. (See *Jer.* xxvi.) And that this Party was in some Correspondence with the *Assyrians*, is probable from the strict Commands *Nebuchadnezzar* gave to save *Jeremiah*, together with the high Offers he made him; and from his making *Gedaliah*, the Son of that *Abikam*, Governor of the Country as soon as it was conquered.

Let us then with Impartiality lay all these Circumstances together; the ancient Alliance of the *Jews* with the *Assyrians*; the Services they had done them, by opposing the *Egyptians*; the Loss they sustained in their Behalf, by the Death of their King and Defeat of their Army; what they suffered when their City was taken, their King dethroned, and a Tax imposed upon them by *Pharao Necho*; that their Sub-

M

mission

mission to the *Ægyptians* was at first the Effect only of Force; that most Part of the People continued in the *Assyrian* Interest; that what Resistance they made to *Nebuchadnezzar* was not great, and, most probably, not so much from Inclination, as Obedience to their King; that their Country was his Frontier against his most potent Enemy and Rival; and that the Reason of his carrying so great Numbers Captive, which *Prideaux* supposes, with great Probability, to be the Peopling of *Babylon*, did not then subsist. And what probable Reason can be assigned for *Nebuchadnezzar's* dealing with so great Severity towards the *Jews* in *Jehoiakim's* Reign; nay provoking them by ill Usage, and at the same Time leaving them in a Capacity, by not dismantling their Fortifications, nor bridling them with Garrisons, to revenge themselves and assist his Enemy. It is far more probable he would shew the greatest Lenity to secure them in his Interest: And this seems the true Reason we hear of no Taxes, or any other Hardships imposed upon them.

But if it is said, That by the Captivity and Desolation of the Land, we are to understand their Subjection to Foreigners: That continued a long Time, and more severe after the seventy Years were expired; and

and in some Measure took Place before *Jeboiakim's* Reign, that is, from *Manasseh's* Captivity, though we know not on what Terms. Nor were they always in a State of Servitude from the fourth of *Jeboiakim* : For *Jeboiakim* after that withdrew his Allegiance for four Years, and *Zedekiah* for a great Part of his Reign. Nor does this Notion at all agree with the Description of the seventy Years Captivity.

But the Truth of Fact, as appears from innumerable Circumstances, is, that the King of *Babylon* never thought of depopulating the Country, and thereby depriving himself of the Revenues arising from it, besides bringing the Burden of an useless Multitude upon his other Dominions, till he was provoked by their repeated Rebellions, and found there was no other Way of keeping them in Subjection. At first he was contented with their Submission, and endeavoured to attach them to his Interest by Mildness. At the End of the second War, when *Jeboiachim* surrendered himself, his Mother, Servants, Princes and Officers, these he carried away Captive ; in which it is most reasonable to think he had the same political Design that the *Romans* had, when upon subduing the *Achæan* League, they obliged a thousand of their principal Citizens

to live in *Italy*; Both that they might be as Hostages, and that the People, being deprived of their Leaders, might be less able to unite themselves into a Body capable of making Head against their Conquerors. Besides these, he carried away the principal Men of War, and all the Craftsmen and Smiths; and that for the same Reason that the *Philistines* would allow no Smiths to live among the *Israelites* when they had conquered them in the Beginning of *Saul's* Government; that they might have no Arms or Instruments of War made among them. That this was *Nebuchadnezzar's* Intention, to disable the *Jews* from rebelling, and not to destroy the Nation, or depopulate the Country, is plain from the particular Account we have of this Captivity, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12.—16. *Jer.* xxiv. 1, 2. and xxix. 2. From all these Passages it appears the King and Royal Family only, the Officers of State, the Princes and Heads of Families and Tribes, the Soldiers, Smiths and Carpenters or Engineers, were carried into Captivity: All the rest of the People, the Husbandmen, and other Artizans, that were not employed in making the Instruments of War, were left. The whole Number of the Captives was only 10,000 or at most 18,000, which bore no Proportion to the People of *Judea*, or even

19

to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* alone. Many of their Nobility, those perhaps who favoured the *Babylonians*, were left; their City was not destroyed; their Government remained in every Respect the same; only a new King was appointed, and an Oath of Allegiance exacted from him; and the whole Nation continued so powerful, that they were able to maintain a long War against the whole Force of *Nebuchadnezzar*: in short, their being able to man the Walls of *Jerusalem*, which still remained the same in Extent, as when in its most flourishing State, is a sufficient Proof that it was far from being unpeopled; for the City was at last taken not so much by Force of Arms as the Famine.

In this Manner the *Jews* might have lived in a pretty tolerable State, enjoying their own Country, publick Magistrates and Laws; as appears from the Representation of *Zedekiah's* Reign in *Jeremiah*, and the Promises the Prophet makes them of living happy, if they would continue faithful Subjects to the *Babylonian* King. But *Zedekiah*, contrary to his Oath, making a League with the King of *Egypt*, and rebelling against the *Babylonians*, involved his Country in a new War: in which *Nebuchadnezzar* having for the third Time taken *Jerusalem*, after a
Siege

Siege of two Years, gratified his Revenge by killing the King's Sons before his Face, then putting out his Eyes, and leading him in Chains to *Babylon*. At the same time, to prevent the like Rebellions for the future, he burnt the City and Temple, and razed their Walls to the Ground; killed the chief Priest and second Priest, the General of the Army, the five principal Officers of State, with the Secretary, and 60 Leaders of the People, and carried many away Captive. But in all this he shewed no Intention of making the Land desolate: for he left the King's Daughters, many of the Nobility, all the Captains of the Armies, them and their Men, for they had only been scattered upon the taking of *Jerusalem*, and great Numbers of the People who had fled into the neighbouring Countries, and returned when the *Chaldeans* were gone; besides the Poor of the Land, the Vine-dressers and Husbandmen. The Cities too were still inhabited, and *Gedaliah* the Son of *Abikam*, who had been Head of the *Babylonish* Faction among the *Jews*, was made their Governor. And even after his Death, when those who apprehended the Revenge of the *Chaldeans*, who were principally the military Men, fled into *Egypt*, though they made a very great Multitude, as *Jeremiah* tells us; yet the Land continued

continued still to be inhabited and cultivated, till the 23d of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and Beginning of the Siege of *Tyre*; for till then the Body of the People were never transported. What has been apt to mislead People, and make them think otherwise, is the general Terms *all* and *none*, used in the Description of *Jehoiachin's* Captivity. But it is plain these Words are not to be taken in the full Extent of their Signification in that Place; and there is nothing more usual in Scripture-style than such Expressions, when describing any Thing that is extraordinary or great.

The Reason that induces me to place the Beginning of the Captivity at the Desolation of the Land, rather than the Dissolution of the Government, and Destruction of the City and Temple, is, That the Scripture expressly tells us, (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 21.) the Design of the Captivity was, That the Land might be desolate for 70 Years, as a Punishment upon the *Jewish* Nation for neglecting to observe the Sabbatical Years of Rest; an Institution of their Law, which they ought to have observed, and after the Captivity did observe as religiously as the 7th Day. This had been neglected for 70 Sabbaths, or 490 Years: Which leads us back as far as the Middle of *Saul's* Reign, or Death of *Samuel*;

Samuel; at which Time they began to be more negligent in these Observances. Nor need we be surpris'd such religious Princes as *David*, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*, should allow of this Breach of the Law; for which several Causes might be assign'd.

Another Reason is, That the 40 Years of God's Forbearance of the House of *Judah*, end precisely at this Time. See *Ezek.* iv. 6. For these Years must be computed from the 18th of *Josiah*, which is the Æra *Ezekiel* always uses; because it was that Year the People made the hypocritical Covenant with God, which is always mentioned as a principal and immediate Cause of the Captivity: and it was in that Year too the Captivity was foretold to the King by *Huldah* the Prophetess, and this Forbearance, or Delay of that Punishment, promised by God upon his Account. All these Things sufficiently determine us where to place the Beginning of the forty Years: and it cannot be imagin'd that twenty three Years of the Captivity should be reckon'd Part of God's Forbearance. Besides, this Computation agrees best with the 390 Years of God's Forbearance of *Israel*, which undoubtedly began at *Jeroboam's* Defection; for from that Time till the 23d of *Nebuchadnezzar* is exactly that Number of Years.

To

To understand this fully, we must consider, That there was a Covenant betwixt God and the Children of *Israel*: whereby he engaged to be their God, and to protect and bleſs them in the Land he had promiſed to their Fathers; and they to be his People, and to maintain the true Worſhip, and ſerve no other God: In witneſs of this, *the Ark of the Covenant* and *Tables of Testimony* were given; God appeared in a viſible Manner in the Temple which he had choſen to dwell in; and there received the Prayers and Sacrifices of his People, and gave Directions, when conſulted in their publick Affairs. The Penalty annexed to the Breach of this Covenant was, That God would withdraw his Preſence, and throw the People out of the Land he had given them. But though the Generality of the People had often been corrupted, and were accordingly puniſhed for their Idolatries: Yet it would appear that the Worſhip of God had never, in a national Manner, and by publick Authority, been laid aſide, till *Jeroboam* ſet up a new Worſhip in *Israel*, and *Manaſſeh* in *Judah*. Then the Covenant was broke, and the People became liable to the Penalty: Which was accordingly denounced againſt *Israel*, that very Day the Altar at *Bethel* was dedicated; and againſt *Judah* in a man-

ner that shews it was the *Babylonish* Captivity that was the Punishment threatned; for it is there said, *God would wipe Jerusalem as a Man wipeth a Dish, turning it upside down.* This Crime was still further aggravated by the Mock-covenant the People made with God, which provoked him to pass that final Sentence upon them in *2 Kings* xxii. 16. Though at the same Time, upon account of the Piety and Repentance of *Josiah*, the Execution of it was delayed; as God declared to him by *Huldah* the Prophetess. And from this Declaration are the forty Years of Forbearance to be computed, for the Reasons already alledged: And because this Sentence could not be said to be executed, nor the Penalty annex to the Breach of the Covenant inflicted, so long as God and the Nation stood in the Relation implied in the Covenant; And this Relation subsisted as long as the Temple-Service remained, or any Society of *Jews* possessed the promised Land, and the Place of Worship appointed by God. This is the Reason why the Years of God's Forbearance of *Israel* are reckoned till the Beginning of the seventy Years; though the Body of the People were long before that dispersed: Because many still remained in the promised Land, joined to the Tribe of *Judah*; because God still dwelt

dwelt in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, to which those who were disperst might direct their Prayers; and because this Temple, which was the Basis of their national Religion, together with the Societies of Priests, Prophets, Levites, the Sanhedrim, publick Assemblies, and other religious Institutions still subsisting, served as general Bonds to connect all the *Jews* as a Church, how much soever they might in other Respects be disjoined.

The Captivity then being the Penalty annexed, at the first giving of the Law, to the Covenant; and the entire Desolation of the Country, the particular Punishment threatened for a Neglect of the sabbatical Years at their first Institution; (*See Levit. xxvi. 33, 34, 35.*) The seventy Years Dispersion being expressly called the inflicting of this Punishment, (*2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.*) and foretold by *Huldah* the Prophetess as the Execution of what is threatned in the Law, (*2 Kings xxii. 16.*) I think it is beyond all question, that the seventy Years did not begin while the Land was inhabited, and the *Jews* a Body politic.

I might add, That after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, *Ezekiel* repeats the Threatnings of God's Wrath as still to come, *Ezek. xxxiii. 21.—29.*

We may next examine the Justness of our

Opinion, by comparing it with the Prophecies relating to other Nations. In the twenty seventh Year of *Jeconiah's* Captivity, which coincides with the thirty fifth of the seventy Years, according to the common Computation, *Ezekiel* lays (*Ezek. xxix. 17, &c.*) that God, to reward *Nebuchadnezzar* for the Toil he had endured in the Siege of *Tyre*, gave him *Egypt* as a Prey: And before that, in the same Chapter, he had foretold that *Egypt* should be desolate for forty Years; and that after forty Years, *their Captivity should be brought again*. These forty Years then must begin when God gave *Egypt* as a Prey to the *Babylonians*; that is, in the common Chronology, the thirty fifth of the Captivity, and must therefore end five Years after the Return of the *Jews*, that is, two Years before *Cyrus's* Death: And it was immediately upon *Cyrus's* Death that his Son *Cambyses* prepared for the Invasion of *Egypt*, which in a few Years he intirely conquered. Now it is not probable the Prophet would foretell the Return of their Captivity, or that *the Land should be inhabited again as in the Days of old*, as *Jeremiah* expresses it, (*Jer. xlv. 26.*) if that Respite was only to last six Years. Nor does it at all agree with History: For *Amasis*, during whose Reign these
these

these forty Years are supposed to have happened, though he had little Authority at the Beginning of his Government, because of his mean Birth; yet in the End of it was a powerful and fortunate Prince: And, according to *Herodotus*, *Egypt* in his Time was at its greatest Height of Grandeur and Wealth. But the Prophecy will agree much better with History, if we suppose the forty Years began the twelfth, and ended the fifty second of the Captivity, one and thirty Years before the Death of *Amasis* and Conquest of *Egypt* by *Cambyses*: Which Period includes the Civil Wars under *Apries*, and Beginning of the Reign of *Amasis*, before he was well established.

In *Isaiah* (xxv. 15, 17.) we find a Prophecy, *That Tyre should be forgotten seventy Years; and that after the End of seventy Years, Tyre should sing as an Harlot*. If we begin these seventy Years from the Time *Nebuchadnezzar* first invested that Town, as they most probably do, then will they coincide with the seventy Years of the *Jewish* Captivity, and expire in the Year *Cyrus* took *Babylon*, and restored *Judea* and all the neighbouring Nations: For there is no Reason to believe he shewed that Favour to the *Jews* only; there was the same political Reason for restoring the other Nations:
And

And we cannot imagine *Cyrus* would be so ignorant of the Advantages of Trade and Naval Force, especially as he had already conquered *Jonia* and *Lydia*, as to neglect *Tyrus*, so happily situated for it. And it is absolutely against the Testimony of all History to suppose its Restoration was later: For whoever is acquainted with what the *Greek* Writers say of these Times must know, that the *Tyrians* were in a very flourishing Condition, and had an extensive Traffick in the Days of *Cyrus*, *Cambyses*, and *Darius Hystaspis*; insomuch that, when *Cambyses* was making Preparations to invade the *Carthaginians*, the *Tyrians* refused to give their Assistance against their own Colony, and disappointed that Expedition: Which they durst not have ventured to do, especially while the *Persian* Army was in that Country, if they had not been very powerful. On this Occasion, I cannot help taking Notice how exactly the Chronology of the *Tyrian* Annals, as given by *Josephus*, agrees with our Calculation. From thence it appears there was thirty six Years betwixt the taking of *Tyre*, and the first of *Cyrus's* Reign over the *Persians*, as it is expressly said; and not over the *Babylonians*, as some would have it: To which, if we add the twenty one Years he reigned before

fore the taking of *Babylon*, and the thirteen Years of the Siege, it makes exactly seventy, the Duration of that City's Sufferings.

It may be remarked too, that the original Prophecy of the seventy Years Captivity is denounced, not only against the *Jews*, but all the neighbouring Nations, and in particular *Tyre*. It is said, they should serve the King of *Babylon* seventy Years; which determines the End of this Term, and Restoration of these Nations, to the Dissolution of the *Babylonian* Empire. Of consequence their Sufferings must have commenced all at the same Time. But it is certain the Siege of *Tyre*, and its seventy Years Captivity, did not begin till after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. That of the *Jews* then could not begin sooner than the same Period.

S E C T. VI.

NEXT to the Testimony of Scripture, those *Jewish* Historians who have composed Part of the *Apocrypha* are of greatest Authority. For whether we consider these Books as containing true Histories, or Fictions founded upon History, or as merely fabulous; this is certain, that the Authors of them would accommodate what they wrote to the Truth of History, so far as they knew it.

it. And as it is acknowledged they are by far the most ancient *Jewish* Writers next to the Canonical, it is probable they would be best acquainted with these Times.

Of these the Book of *Judith* contains several Facts relating to the History of the *Medes* and *Assyrians*. There we are told; That *Nabuchodonosor* King of *Niniveh*, in the twelfth Year of his Reign, made war with *Arphaxad* King of the *Medes*, the same who built Walls round *Ecbatan*; that all the Nations West of *Assyria* refused to assist him; that he nevertheless, in the seventeenth Year of his Reign, engaged with the *Medes*, defeated and killed *Arphaxad* in the Mountains of *Ragan*, became Master of his Cities, and defaced *Ecbatan*; that next Year, to revenge himself on these Nations who had refused to obey his Summons, he sent *Holophernes* against them with a great Army: who, having subdued several Countries, at last attack'd *Judea*, while *Eliakim* or *Jeboiakim*, for the Name is the same, was High-priest. And that lastly, this *Holophernes* was by a Stratagem of *Judith* killed.

The Difficulty of connecting this Account with any Part of History has made some learned Men think it all an allegorical Fiction. And indeed if we consider the common
Hy-

Hypothesis by which they are reconciled, it will not be surprising that such Men are not satisfied. It first supposes *Nebuchadnezzar* was a Name common to all the *Babylonian* Kings, without alledging any Authority; and that the *Nabuchodonosor* here mentioned was *Saosduchinus*, a Name no where found but in *Ptolemy's* Canon. Then it supposes *Deioces*, the first King of the *Medes*, to be *Arphaxad*, because he built *Ecbatan*; and by following *Jerom's* Latin Translation, places the Beginning of the War and his Death both in the 12th Year of this *Saosduchinus*; though, according to their own Chronology, he died in the 11th. But there is no Mention of any War *Deioces* ever had, or that he died an unnatural Death, in any Historian; nor is it agreeable to the Character of the Man, or Account of his Reign. For he was a peaceable Prince, raised to the Kingdom, by the free Choice of the *Medians*, merely for his Moderation, Justice and Wisdom: and therefore turned all his Attention to civilize the People by Arts and Laws, and to establish the regal Power by several political Institutions, and the Fortifications of his Capital *Ecbatan*. Besides, he must have been above ninety when he died: for he reigned 53 Years, and could be no less than 40, when he had established so great an Authority by his

O

his

his Character for Justice and Wisdom, by which Influence is not so soon acquired as by Valour, so as to be advanced to the Kingdom without any other Title, in the Manner *Herodotus* relates.

The Invasion of *Judea*, according to the Account in *Judith*, must have happened immediately after they had been conquered; when *Eliakim* was High-priest; and when either there was no King, or he was of no Authority, for he is not once mentioned. Now though there might have been a High-priest called *Eliakim*, in the 44th of *Manasseh*, where this Event is placed; yet there appears no Reason why the King is never mentioned; nor had they been so lately conquered then, as is supposed in this Book, for *Manasseh's* Captivity was above twenty Years before that Time.

But the Truth of it is, this War is expressly mentioned in profane History, and particularly by *Herodotus*. He relates, That when *Deioces* died, his Son *Phraortes*, by others called *Aphraartes*, being of a warlike Disposition, and finding the Kingdom sufficiently established, endeavoured to extend his Dominions by Conquest on every Side. He first joined the *Persians* to the *Median* Empire; then subdued several neighbouring Nations; and at last attack'd the *Assyrians*.

Syrians. Herodotus says, It was those *Assyrians* who possessed *Nineveh*, and had formerly held the Empire of *Asia*, but were then deserted by their Allies, though still very powerful; and that in this War *Phraortes* was killed and his Army dispersed. All this agrees exactly with the History of *Judith*.

This Event happened 96 Years before the taking of *Babylon*; for after *Phraortes*, *Cyaxares* reigned 40 Years, *Astyages* 35, and *Cyrus* 21, before he took *Babylon*. At the same time, according to the Chronology we have established, *Nabopolassar* was King of *Babylon* and *Niniveh*, and in the 17th Year of his Reign; as that Year coincides with the 96th before the taking of *Babylon*: For he reigned 21 Years, and in the 23d of his Successor *Nebuchadnezzar*, the seventy Years of the *Jewish* Captivity began, which ended with the taking of *Babylon*. This King then is the *Nabuchodonosor* mentioned in *Judith*: which we affirm, not upon Supposition that it was a Name common to all the *Babylonian* Kings, for which we know no Warrant, nor because it agrees with our Calculation; but because he is actually so called by Historians, as particularly by *Josephus*.

I might add to this, that such a Resemblance has been observed, by several learned

Men, betwixt the Names *Aphraartes* and *Arphaxad*, that they have believed them the same. It has been observed too, That tho' *Arphaxad* is said to have built the Walls of *Ecbatan*, that is no Proof he was *Dei-oces* the Founder of that City: for the *Greek* Words used in that Passage signify only, *that he made additional Buildings to Ecbatan*. And, as that City was surrounded with seven Walls all one within another; it is very probable such an ambitious Prince, as he was, might have enlarged it, and added new Walls to what his Father had left.

Let us next see how this Account agrees with the *Babylonian* History. In the Book before us it is said, That the Nations to whom *Nabuchodonosor* sent despised his Message, for he appeared to them *as a Man equal*, or upon a Level with others. This agrees with the Situation of *Nabopolassar*, who was originally a private Man that usurped the Kingdom: and it is probable his Authority had not as yet extended over those remote Provinces; which did not therefore acknowledge him as King, but considered him as a private Man, and would not obey his Summons. *Berosus* informs us, That, at the End of his Reign, when *Egypt*, *Syria*, and the neighbouring Nations rebelled, he sent a great Army against them. This Re-
bellion

bellion, is the same with the Expedition of *Pharaoh Necho* related in the Scripture History, which gave Occasion to all *Nebuchadnezzar's* Wars in those Parts. This again coincides in time with the Expedition of *Holophernes*, which was undertaken in the eighteenth of *Nabopolassar*, or fourth before his Death: For it appears from Scripture, that the King of *Egypt's* Invasion happened in the fourth Year before the first of *Nebuchadnezzar* the Great. So that all these are the same War: Which serves much to illustrate these four Years that past betwixt the Death of *Josiah*, and the Siege of *Jerusalem*. And it was probably to retrieve the Credit of his Arms, which must have suffered greatly by the Defeat of *Holophernes's* Army, that *Nabopolassar* made his Son General, and gave him the Title of King.

If we look to the Situation of the *Jewish* State at that Time, we will find all Circumstances as exactly agree. That very Year, or the Year before, their Country had been conquered, and their City taken by the King of *Egypt*. This is the Calamity mentioned in *Judith*, from which the People had not recovered themselves. For the *Greek* Word there used does not always signify what we call a Captivity, or a Transportation into a strange Country, but originally and pro-

properly a Capture in War. At the same Time *Jeboiakim* or *Eliakim*, for the Name is the same, the Son of *Hilkiah* was High-priest. At least it appears from the first Chapter of *Baruch*, that he was in that Office in the fifth Year of *Jeconiah's* Captivity, which was but sixteen Years after this Time: Nor do we know any other of that Name that was High-priest before the Captivity. And there is great Probability the King, who was *Jeboiakim*, would have very little Authority at the Beginning of his Reign: For it appears he was disagreeable to the People by their overlooking him at his Father's Death, and making his younger Brother King; and he had been just then imposed upon them against their Will by the *Egyptians*: Which is the Reason he is never mentioned as acting in this History. As for *Achior's* Speech in the fifth Chapter; that relates to all the Calamities and Dispersions the *Jews* had suffered at several Times for departing from the Law of God: And the Temple's being cast to the Ground may be a figurative Expression for its being dishonoured. What he says of the Piety of the *Jews* at that Time, agrees very well with the Order which the good Reign of *Josiah* had established.

Another Event related in the *Apocrypha*, is the Destruction of *Nineveh*; which in the
End

End of *Tobit* is said to be taken by *Nabuchodonosor* and *Assuerus* or *Abashverosh*. It is the Opinion of Dr. *Hyde*, and he is followed by several learned Men, that *Cyaxares* is the same Name with *Abashverosh*. And indeed, how differently soever they may sound in our Language, the Change was quite natural in the Transition from the Oriental Pronunciation to the *Greek*. For, throwing out the Aspirate in the Beginning of the second Syllable, which the *Greeks* have no Letter to express, and changing the first *Shin* into *Xi*, which corresponds to it in the *Greek* Alphabet, and the last into *Sigma*, we have *Axares*: For the Vowels, not being Letters in the Eastern Way of writing, are often in such Cases changed at Pleasure.

Accordingly, *Herodotus* says it was *Cyaxares* who destroyed *Nineveh*. And this he must have done, either in the Beginning, or at the End of his Reign: For a little after the Beginning of it, the *Scythians* invaded and subdued all the *Median* Empire, which they held eight and twenty Years. Now those who follow the common Chronology cannot place this Event at the Beginning of his Reign; for, according to them, the first ten Years of it past before *Nabopolassar* was King of *Babylon*; nor at the End, for then
Ne-

Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in his *Syrian* Wars, and could not assist him. And therefore they are obliged to place it within the twenty eight Years that the *Scythians* were Masters of upper *Asia*, when it is evident from History, the *Medes* were not in Condition to undertake such a War. But according to the true Chronology, this might fall in the Beginning of *Cyaxares's* Reign, and End of *Nabopolassar's*, a little after the Death of *Phraortes*, when the *Medes*, as lately overcome, would be obliged to assist the *Assyrians*. Accordingly, *Herodotus* tells us, That in the Beginning of his Reign he besieged *Nineveh*: and though he was obliged to leave it to oppose the *Scythians*; yet the Siege might have been continued, and the Town taken by the *Assyrians*, and the Action ascribed to both Kings by the Writer of *Tobit*. This seems to agree best with the History of *Tobit*; For there *Tobias* is said to have lived to hear of the Destruction of *Nineveh*. Or it might have happened near the End of *Cyaxares's* Reign, after the *Scythians* were expelled, and after *Nebuchadnezzar* had taken *Tyre*, reduced *Egypt*, and put an End to his *Syrian* Wars, which agrees best with *Herodotus*.

I shall conclude all, that needs be said on this Question, with the Testimony of *Josephus*

sephus. He frequently says that the Country, City and Temple lay in Ruins and uninhabited seventy Years; and begins these Years, after the Destruction of the City, and Flight into *Egypt* upon the Death of *Gedaliah*. This appears further in the Distance he makes betwixt the Captivity of the *Israelites*, and that of *Judah*, an hundred and thirty Years six Months; in which Number he falls short of the Destruction of the Temple but two or three Years. If we would suppose Months had slipped into the Text instead of Years, it would agree with our Computation: But this Liberty I would not use, even with so incorrect an Author as *Josephus*. Tho' this Correction seems to be confirmed by the Years he assigns the *Babylonian* Kings: For after *Nebuchadnezzar* had reigned forty three Years, his Son *Evilmerodach*, according to him, reigned eighteen; then *Niglissarus* his Son held the Kingdom forty Years, his Son *Labosordachus* nine Months, and last of all *Naboandelus* seventeen Years, in whose Time *Cyrus* took *Babylon*. 'Tis evident the Years of *Niglissarus* must be corrected; for they agree neither with his own nor any other Scheme: And as the Error might most naturally arise, in transcribing the *Greek* Text, form mistaking τεσσαρακαίδεκα for τεσσαρά-

κοντα, fourteen for forty, so it is the only Reading that will agree with any Period. If this be allowed, all the Reigns added together make fifty Years: and therefore to complete the seventy, we can reckon only from the twenty third of *Nebuchadnezzar*. From this one would imagine *Josephus* agreed with us. But in other Passages he seems rather to compute from the Destruction of the City and Temple: As where he says, *These Things Cyrus knew by reading a Book of Prophecies writ by Isaiah, two hundred and ten Years before his Time*, compared with, *These things Isaiah foretold a hundred and forty Years before the Destruction of the Temple*; though it is possible he might in this Passage neglect the odd Number, intending only to shew the gross Distance, and not to settle any chronological Question. Thus it is uncertain from which of these Periods *Josephus* reckons: But this is certain, that he never seems once to have thought of beginning at the fourth of *Jeboiakim*.

There is but one Difficulty occurs to me just now, that may be urged against what we have said. It is, That in the second Year of *Cyrus*, when the Foundation of the second Temple was laid, *many of the Priests and Levites, and chief of the Fathers*

thers, ancient Men (the original Word signifies Elders) *that had seen the first House wept.* See *Ezra* iii. 12. Now this, according to our Account, was seventy five Years after the first Temple was destroyed: And therefore, supposing all after eighty could have remembred it, they must have been but a very inconsiderable Number: But, according to the common Account fifty three Years only had past since the first Temple; And therefore all above sixty may be supposed to have remembred it.

But this Difficulty will vanish, if, instead of *that had seen*, we interpret the *Hebrew* Word, *that looked to, that considered*, (as it is sometimes translated) the first Temple, and compared it with the second, in which they saw so many and great Defects: Not so much in Riches and Grandeur, as the Manifestations of the divine Favour, and what belonged to their Worship; the Ark of the Covenant and Mercy-seat, the *Shechinah*, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the holy Fire, with many other Things that were now lost. For it would be unreasonable to think, that those only who had actually seen the first Temple would be affected with Sorrow upon this Comparison; especially as those things, the Remembrance of which excited this Passion most, were never seen by any

but the High Priest. It deserves to be remarked too, that the Distinction is not made meerly betwixt the Young and Old; but the People of Education, Character and Birth, such as the Priests, Levites and chief of the Fathers were, and the unthinking Vulgar. Besides, the Noise of their Weeping is represented as equal to the Shouts of the whole People; so that they could not be discerned from each other: which could not be the Case, if those only among the Priests, Levites, and chief of the Fathers were meant who had seen the first Temple, and must at that Time have been at least above sixty Years old. For considering how small a Proportion of the People in general, and Levites in particular returned, which was only four Courses of twenty four; we may conclude, there was a smaller Proportion still of old Men past sixty; who, having been long settled at *Babylon*, would shun the Fatigues of so tedious a March, and Difficulties of a new Settlement in a desolate Country.

There is another Text from which the same Argument is drawn in *Haggai* ii. 3. where in the second Year of *Darius*, the Prophet says, *Who is left among you that saw this House in her first Glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your Eyes, in comparison of it as nothing?* Now, if
this

this was in the second Year of *Darius Hystaspis*, where some place it, then was it ninety two or ninety three Years after the Destruction of the Temple in our Calculation: So that we can suppose none living at that Time, who had seen the first Temple under a hundred Years old. And if we reckon it the second of *Darius Nothus*, as many learned Men have done, then the Distance will be above an hundred and ninety Years; an Age exceeding all Credibility. But I have many other Reasons, besides its Incompatibility with what we have proved, against taking this Text in the Sense of our Translators. *Scaliger* and many others explain it, *Were any left among you who had seen, &c.* And indeed the Penury of the *Hebrew* Language, in the Ways of expressing the various Affections and Modifications of Verbs, but too often allows of such Ambiguities. But I chuse rather to explain it in the same Manner as the other Text, *Who is left among you that has considered, &c.*

It now remains to enquire whether the Captivity ended immediately upon the taking of *Babylon*, or two Years after: But, besides that most Part of Chronologists agree in Opinion with us, as we have all along confined our selves to the Testimony of *Jewish* Writers; and this Question cannot

not be determined but by the *Greek* Historians, we shall not enter into any Examination of it just now. All we proposed was, to give that Account of this Prophecy, and the Chronology connected with it, that seems to be most naturally deduced from Scripture: And this, by the by, has appeared to agree best with the History of the *Tyrians* and *Medes*. All that is requisite to complete this Enquiry then is, to compare it with the Chronology of the *Babylonians*, with which we know it will be thought to differ; Though after Examination it appears pretty evident to us, that our Chronology alone agrees with the most authentick Accounts of the *Babylonian* History, as well as best reconciles the Differences of Authors, explains the Scripture, and removes all those Difficulties that have perplexed this Period. This we could prove were it proper to enter just now upon so extensive a Question, after so long a Dissertation upon this dry and complicated Subject.

4 OC 58

THE END.

3